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A Corpus of Early Medieval Armenian Inscriptions

TIMOTHY GREENWOOD

Traditionally the small body of Armenian inscriptions that date from the seventh and eighth centuries has been studied from three scholarly perspectives. These inscriptions have been used extensively by palaeographers, eager to bridge the gap between the traditional date of the creation of the Armenian alphabet by Maštoc' at the beginning of the fifth century and the earliest dated Gospel from the end of the ninth century.¹ Architectural historians too have been quick to turn to the epigraphic record, using their chronological precision to trace both the development of Armenian church design and decoration and the history of individual structures.² Finally, inscriptions in Armenian have been used to attest the presence of Armenian monastic communities in Jerusalem as well as confirming the pattern of Armenian pilgrimage to Sinai and elsewhere.³ The disciplines of Armenian palaeography and Armenian art and architectural history would be far more challenging were it not for the contribution of these inscriptions. Therefore it is perhaps all the more surprising to discover that the historical potential of this body of primary

¹ For use of these inscriptions by palaeographers, see Y. Tašean, *Aknark mē hnagrut'ēan vray. Osumnasirut' iwn Hayoc' grč'utean aruestin* (Vienna, 1898); G. Yovsēp'ean, *Grč'ut'ean aruestē hin Hayoc' mēj. Kartēz hay hnagrut'ēan* (Vašaršapat, 1913), nos. 1–11 and pls. 1–8; A. G. Abrahamyan, *Hayoc' gir ev grč'ut'yun* (Erevan, 1973), 80–88; M. E. Stone, D. Kouymjian, and A. Lehmann, *Album of Armenian Paleography* (Aarhus, 2002), 14, ill. 2 and 3 and 112–15. A marginal note on fol. 463r in the Gospel of Queen Mlk'ē, the wife of Gagik Arcruni, king of Vaspurakan, reads: “466 Pages | 311 Era | Arac' 28 Monday | Areg 6 Thursday”; see *Mayr čučak hayerēn jerağrac' matenadaranin Mxit'areanc' i Venetik*, ed. B. Sargisean (Venice, 1914), 373–92; M. Janashian, *Armenian Miniature Painting of the Monastic Library of San Lazzaro* (Venice, 1966), 16–23 and pl. 23; and Stone, Kouymjian, and Lehmann, *Album*, no. 1. The date of this Gospel remains contentious. Although most authorities favor Armenian Era 311 (25 April 862/24 April 863), this figure has been read variously as 351 (15 April 902/14 April 903) and 361 (12 April 912/11 April 913). Moreover, this marginal note cannot refer to the date of composition of the whole Gospel because the interval between the two specific dates is a mere 38 days. On fol. 137v, a separate colophon confirms the gift of the Gospel by Queen Mlk'ē to the monastery of Varag: “I, Mlk'ē, hand-maiden of Christ and queen of Armenia, in 361 of the era gave this Gospel to this [church of the] Holy Mother of God which, through my own means and expenses, I built for the assistance of me and my king, Gagik, and his children.” It need not have been commissioned by her. As Janashian has observed, there can be no doubt that the Gospel was in her possession by 912 at the latest, thereby providing an invaluable *terminus ante quem* for palaeographers.

² J. Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa*, 2 vols. (Vienna, 1918), 1:29–52; T' T'oramanyan, *Nyu'er haykakan čartarapetut'yan patmut'yan*, 2 vols. (Erevan, 1942, 1948). For individual use, see N. and J.-M. Thierry, “La cathédrale de Mren et sa décoration,” *CahArch* 21 (1971): 43–77.

³ M. E. Stone, “Holy Land Pilgrimage of Armenians before the Arab Conquest,” *RevBibl* 93 (1986): 94–110; idem, *The Armenian Inscriptions from the Sinai*, Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 6 (Cambridge, Mass., 1982); idem, “Armenian Inscriptions of the Fifth Century from Nazareth,” *REArm* 22 (1990–91): 315–32.

material has not been fully appreciated or exploited. Scholarly debate has largely been restricted to reconstructing those dedicatory inscriptions which are fragmentary, with a view to establishing either the date of the foundation or completion of the structure, or the identity of the sponsor.⁴ Yet on the basis that the inscriptions are authentic, they possess a much broader historical significance. Not only can they operate as secure, independent controls against which to compare the dating mechanisms and social terminology found in contemporary Armenian literary sources; they can also be used to complement these sources because they contain their own reflections of the structure of Armenian society and its evolution under Sasanian, Byzantine, and Islamic hegemony.

THE COMPILATION OF THE CORPUS

The relevant inscriptions and their respective translations are set out in Appendix 1. Complete or partial photographic representations of all but five of these inscriptions are supplied in Appendix 2.⁵ The corpus is divided into two: those inscriptions originating in Armenia, whether in Armenian, Greek, or Arabic, and those Armenian inscriptions found outside Armenia. As it happens, the latter derive exclusively from Jerusalem. Thus “Armenian” has been defined both geographically and linguistically, while “relevance” has been determined on the twin criteria of date and historical potential. Although such categorization is useful, enabling the body of evidence to be presented in an ordered fashion, it is worth remembering that these divisions are artificial and that it would be unwise to place too much emphasis upon them. They tend to highlight certain common features—the location and language of the inscription—at the expense of others, notably content and purpose. Thus several of the mosaic inscriptions from Jerusalem intercede for named individuals in much the same way as several of the Armenian and Greek inscriptions found in Armenia. Conversely, while a majority of the Armenian inscriptions in Armenia commemorate the foundation of a church, a significant minority cannot be confined to a single category, attesting a wide range of contexts and motivations.

It is important to stress at the outset that this corpus is not intended to be an exhaustive collection of Armenian inscriptions dating from the early medieval period. Several inscriptions from Armenia have been excluded on the grounds that they are of such a fragmentary nature as to be almost without meaning (Ełvard, Ojun, and Djvari).⁶ Others have been omitted because they comprise little more than a name or group of names (Ptñi,

⁴ A. A. Manuč'aryan, *K'nnut'yun Hayastani IV–XI dāri šinarakan v'kayagreri* (Erevan, 1977), 48–106, provides an invaluable summary of the previous scholarship and discusses the suggested readings.

⁵ The Armenian inscriptions at Hiip'simē (A.2.2), Bagavan (A.5), and Naxčavan (A.8), the Greek inscription at Mastara (A.15), and the Arabic inscription at Aruč (A.20) lack any photographic record. The photographs of the churches of Bagaran (Fig. 3) and Ałaman (Fig. 4) include short fragments of the band inscription. The poor condition of several other photographs is self-evident (Figs. 6, 10.4, and 17).

⁶ Ełvard: T'oromanyan, *Nyut'er*, 2:127–56; V. L. Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture*, 7 vols. (Zug, 1980–90), 3: microfiche 008, pls. A9–D2. Ojun: G. Šaxk'yan, “Ojuni eketec'u vał šrjani arjanagruťyunnerč,” *Lraber Hasarakakan Gituťyunneri* (hereafter *Lraber*) (1972) 9:90–101; P. M. Muradyan, “Ditoťuťyunner Ojuni arjanagruťyunneri vercanuťyan arťiv,” *Lraber* (1973) 6:69–81; A. N. Šahinyan, “Ojuni tačari karuc'man žamanaki masin,” *IFZh (Patmabanasirakan Handēs)* (1974) 4:123–27; Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture*, 7: microfiche 159, pls. C10–D3. Djvari: P. M. Mouradian, “L'inscription arménienne de l'église de Djvari,” *REArm* 5 (1968): 109–39; I. Abouladze, “Quelques remarques à propos de l'article de P. Mouradian: L'inscription arménienne de l'église de Djvari,” *REArm* 6 (1969): 373–91; P. M. Mouradian, “Encore au sujet de l'inscription arménienne de l'église de Djvari,” *REArm* 6 (1969): 393–411; K. Salia, “Quelques remarques au sujet de deux articles de P. Moura-

Sisian, and Ateni) or because an early medieval date is at best unproven (Ani).⁷ In addition, the corpus does not include the pilgrim graffiti from Sinai and Nazareth, carved by literate but nonspecialist engravers. Although of great interest to palaeographers, this body of material has no significant contribution to make to this study, comprising for the most part a series of Christian names, occasionally combined with a simple invocation. Instead, this corpus is focused upon those inscriptions that clearly date from the early medieval period and possess historical potential, both individually and collectively.

Two further preliminary observations need to be made in relation to the composition of the corpus. First, insofar as has been possible, the accepted reading for each inscription has been checked against the photographic record. On the basis of this exercise, several minor modifications have been proposed. Second, each inscription has been reproduced in the Appendix in accordance with conventional epigraphic practice. Distinctions have been drawn between those letters that are certain, those that are probable, and those that are lost or illegible. The latter category is further divided into those that may be restored with confidence and those for which no restoration is proposed. The intention has been to supply a more accurate description of what can and cannot be read. For this reason, the lengthy restorations proposed by I. A. Orbeli, A. A. Manuč'aryan, and S. X. Mnac'akanyan in relation to the identity of the sponsor at Bagavan (A.5) and the date of construction at Mren (A.7) have been omitted.⁸ These are speculative and have served only to divert attention away from those elements that are secure.

AUTHENTICITY OF THE ARMENIAN INSCRIPTIONS

At the start of the twentieth century, both N. Marr and Orbeli expressed doubts over the authenticity of the earliest Armenian inscriptions in Armenia.⁹ Their unease was prompted by the presence of numerous vulgarisms and neologisms. Orbeli also had misgivings about the well-developed and well-established letter forms in the inscription at Bagavan (A.5). Their objections seem to have been predicated upon a shared conviction that the Armenian language was originally uniform in nature. Whereas the written form of the Armenian language may have possessed such a quality in the immediate aftermath

dian: 1. Sur la critique de texte de la troisième lettre du Catholikos Abraham; 2. L'inscription arménienne de l'église de Djvari," *BK* 26 (1969): 145–60.

⁷ Ptñi: Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture*, 1: microfiche 039, pl. E3: ՄԱՆՈ [Ի]ԷՂ, ԱՄԱՏՈՒՆԵԱՅ ՏԷՐ—“Manuē lord (*tēr*) of Amatunik’.” Ateni: Z. N. Alek'sidze, *Atenis Sionis somxuri carcarebi* (Tiflis, 1978), 119–23 and pl. 1: ԵՍ ԹՈՒՈՍԱԿ ՇԻՆՈՂ, ՍՐԲՈՑ ԵԿԵՂԵ[ՅԻՈՅՍ]—“I T'odosak, builder of this holy church.” Sisian: Manuč'aryan, *K'nnut'yun Hayastani*, 80–82: ԿՈՀԱԶԱՏ ՍԻՆԻՆԵԱՅ ՏԷՐ | ՏԷՐ ՅՈՎՍԵՓ ՍԻՆԻՆԵԱՅ ԵՊԻՍԿՈՊՈՍ | ԹՈՒՈՐՈՍ ՍԻՆԻՆ ԿԱՆԱԿԱՆ | ՅՈՎՀԱՆԷՍ ԵԿԵՂԵՅՊԱՆ—“Kohazat Lord of Siwnik/Lord Yovsep' bishop of Siwnik/T'odoros monk of Sion/Yovhanēs sacristan.” Ani: Yovsēp'ean, *K'artēz*, no. 4 and pl. 4; I. A. Orbeli, *Izbrannye trudy* (Erevan, 1963), 413–19 and pl. LVII: ԵՍ ԱԲՍՈՂՄ ԿԱՐԴԱՊԵՏ ՇԻՆԵՅԻ ԶԵԿԵՂԵՅԻՍ Ի ԹՈՒԱԿԱՆՈՒԹԵԱՆ ՀԱ[ՅՈՅ] . . .—“I Absołm vardapet built this church in Era of the Armenians . . .” This inscription has been interpreted as referring to Era 71, but it seems more probable that ՀԱ are in fact the first two letters of Hayoc'.

⁸ Bagavan (A.5): Orbeli, *Izbrannye trudy*, 371–87; S. X. Mnac'akanyan, “Bagavani tačari šinararakan arjanagruťyan vercanman harc'i šurjē,” *IFZh* (1964) 2:213–26. Mren (A.7): A. A. Manuč'aryan, “Mreni ew T'alini tačarneri šinararakan arjanagruťyunnerē,” *IFZh* (1966) 1:247–52; S. X. Mnac'akanyan, “Erb ē kařuc'el Mreni tačarē,” *IFZh* (1969) 3:149–64.

⁹ For Marr's objections, see K. Kostaneanc', *Vimakan Taregir: C'uc'ak žotovacoy arjanagruť'eanč Hayoc'* (St. Petersburg, 1913), xviii–xix; Orbeli, *Izbrannye trudy*, 371–404.

of its final elaboration, it seems inherently unlikely that contemporary speech was so characterized, nor that such uniformity would have persisted even in the written form for any length of time. Instead of dismissing these inscriptions on the grounds of linguistic non-conformity, it seems preferable to accept them as good evidence for contemporary variation in both syntax and spelling.¹⁰

However, their arguments do raise a key issue, namely, the authenticity of these inscriptions. It is not enough simply to dismiss the possibility that anyone might wish to commission a false inscription, nor to query the means and opportunity such an operation would require. In order to gauge whether or not an inscription is genuine, two diagnostic tests have been undertaken. The location and layout of each inscription have been established and the results compared with one another and with other Near Eastern epigraphic traditions. Six of the Armenian inscriptions from Armenia can be accepted as original, and hence authentic, solely on the basis of their position and layout. The second test has been palaeographic, requiring the forms of the letters to be consistent with an early date.

In his study of Armenian church architecture, J. Strzygowski surveyed those inscriptions he considered to be relevant to his project and divided them into three categories: “Gürtelinschriften,” “Ersatzinschriften,” and “Mehrzeilige Flächen-[oder Felder-]inschriften mit ursprünglicher Schrift,” that is, band inscriptions, substitute inscriptions, and multi-line flat or panel inscriptions in original script.¹¹ Although his controversial theories on the relationship between Armenian and European church architecture have long since been challenged, his preliminary study of the epigraphic evidence remains an important starting point, not least for the inclusion of several photographs that illustrate the position and layout of certain inscriptions on structures now completely destroyed.¹²

Under his first heading, Strzygowski discussed two band inscriptions in detail, namely, those at Bagaran (A.3) and Ałaman (A.4), and noted the existence of two others, at Ełvard and Naxčavan (A.8).¹³ In fact, six inscriptions should be included under this heading: the four identified by Strzygowski, together with the inscription at Bagavan (A.5) and the fragmentary inscription at Ojun. Four of these inscriptions are included in this corpus: those at Bagaran (A.3), Ałaman (A.4), Bagavan (A.5), and Naxčavan (A.8). Those at Ełvard and Ojun have been omitted from the corpus because they are extremely fragmentary and so fail the “historical potential” test. Nevertheless, they have an important contribution to make to this study of location and layout, not least because the other four inscriptions no longer exist. The following descriptions have been pieced together from surviving records and photographs.

According to Orbeli, the inscription at the church of Bagaran (A.3) encircled the exterior of the whole building, beginning at the northern face of the western apse and running across the southern, eastern, and northern apses respectively.¹⁴ Figure 3 confirms that the inscription was carved as a single line of text onto the topmost row of prepared masonry

¹⁰ See, e.g., *kat'atikosut'ean* rather than *kat'otikosut'ean* and *episkaposi* rather than *episkoposi* at Tekor (A.1); and *marčpanut'ean* rather than *marzpanut'ean* at Bagaran (A.3).

¹¹ Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 1:32.

¹² Strzygowski's theories of artistic development are scrutinized in C. Maranci, *Medieval Armenian Architecture: Constructions of Race and Nation*, Hebrew University Armenian Studies 2 (Leuven, 2001).

¹³ Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 1:32–38.

¹⁴ Orbeli, *Izbrannye trudy*, 390.

blocks, located immediately below the level of the roof. Although Orbeli's reconstruction indicates that the inscription ran as a single line across the majority of the blocks, it also reveals that several blocks carried double lines of text.¹⁵ Two lines of text were consistently applied around the northern apse which carried the last part of the inscription. This switch from a single band to double lines suggests to me that the carver ran out of space. In order to complete the inscription, he was forced to revise the relationship between text and surface and alter the layout. However, this only invites the question: why did he not plan the inscription to fit the area available? The most attractive proposition is that the inscription at Bagaran is composite, comprising two distinct parts. The first ran around the western, southern, and eastern apses. The second was limited to the surface of the northern apse, where the switch to double lines of text occurred. This proposition is supported by significant differences in content between the two parts. The first part of the inscription is chronologically precise. It identifies the original sponsor as But Arueſean as well as revealing how his wife, Annay, took over the responsibility for the completion of the construction after his murder. The second part is undated. Its meaning is by no means clear, but it appears to be limited to intercession on behalf of Annay and her young children and on behalf of Šušan, who may be Annay's sister. Thus it seems to me that the two parts are directly linked to each other through the person of Annay. On this basis, I would conjecture that the wording of the inscription was expanded at the time of completion or shortly afterwards at the instigation of Annay herself, prompting the use of double lines on the northern apse to accommodate the additional intercessions. Intriguingly, Annay seems to be inviting God's protection over herself and her children in this world rather than interceding on behalf of their souls in the next. Could it be that her husband's murder prompted Annay to make this addition to the inscription, as she struggled to defend the interests of her offspring?

In contrast to the above, the band inscription on the church at Ałaman (A.4) extended across only the southern and eastern elevations, ending on the northeastern wall of the eastern apse.¹⁶ Since the wording of the text comes to a natural conclusion at that point, it seems that the northern and western exterior walls were left blank intentionally. According to Orbeli, the inscription was carved as a single line of text across a single row of blocks without recourse to twin lines at any point.¹⁷ Strzygowski's photographic record has again proved invaluable in confirming its location. Whereas the foundation inscription at Bagaran (A.3) was located on the highest row of prepared blocks below roof level, Figure 4 reveals that the inscription was located on the fourth row below this level, even though this caused the linear continuity of the inscription to be interrupted by two small windows. It is worth noting that neither of these photographs was taken with the intention of recording the inscription. That both do so confirms that the inscriptions were legible from some distance away and from ground level and implies that they were intended to be so.

For reasons unknown, the inscription at Bagavan (A.5) was not included by Strzygowski in his category of band inscriptions. However, Afišan records that the inscription ran in a single line around the southern, eastern, and northern elevations of the church.¹⁸ This is partially confirmed by Orbeli. His painstaking reconstruction indicates that the

¹⁵ Ibid., 391.

¹⁶ Ibid., 394–95; Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 1:36.

¹⁷ Orbeli, *Izbrannye trudy*, 395, 397.

¹⁸ L. Afišan, *Ayrarat bnašxarh Hayastaneayc* (Venice, 1890), 529.

inscription ran along the southern façade and then across the external faces of the three apses along the eastern elevation. However, he does not indicate that it extended onto the northern wall as well.¹⁹ Unfortunately the photographs of this large church supplied by Orbeli are of very poor quality and it is not possible to make out the height at which the inscription ran.²⁰

The inscription from the church at Naxčavan (A.8) was already incomplete when it was first recorded. According to Aḡišan, a single line of text ran as a band across the exterior surface of the north wall, although Manuč'aryan also refers to characters on the surface of the western elevation as well.²¹ Both the beginning and the conclusion of the inscription are missing, implying that at least two and possibly all three of the other elevations were similarly girdled. Strzygowski's photograph is of very poor quality, but it may be possible to make out the faint imprint of the inscription two-thirds of the way up the wall, on the upper part of the fourth row of blocks beneath the roofline, pierced once again by windows. If this were correct, its location would be similar to the inscription at Aḡaman (A.4).

This study of the location and layout of band inscriptions must also take into account the evidence of the inscriptions at Etvard and Ojun. Although the inscription stretching along the southern wall of the church at Etvard is fragmentary and difficult to read, it too comprises a single band of text. It was carved at a height just below the lintels of the three door frames, extending across the portal capitals. It is therefore at a slightly lower level than those described above.²² T'oramanyan dated the construction of this church to the later sixth century because he believed that the inscription referred specifically to the *kat'olikos* Movsēs II (574–604).²³ Later commentators have challenged the accuracy of his reading. Unfortunately the issue is destined to remain unresolved because the relevant part of the inscription has suffered considerable weathering and is no longer legible. A. Šahinyan also modified T'oramanyan's argument on architectural grounds.²⁴ In spite of these differences, there seems to be little doubt that the band inscription is either fifth- or sixth-century in date.

The church at Ojun also preserves several fragments of a band inscription. These are located on its eastern elevation, four rows up from ground level. Unlike the other inscriptions, it is not possible to establish whether or not this inscription originally ran in a continuous band along this elevation. Although at least two blocks carry very well preserved letters, several of the intervening blocks do not bear the trace, however weathered, of any carving. It is clear, however, that the block bearing the name "T'eodoro[s]" has been recut, enabling a block carved with a *xač'kar* (carved medieval cross) to be fitted beneath it.²⁵ Thus although those blocks carrying letters appear to derive from an early medieval band inscription, it is not certain that they are in their original location. The proposition that these blocks were moved from their original location in the course of a rebuilding would explain the low position of this inscription as well as its unique location, confined exclusively to the eastern elevation.

¹⁹ Orbeli, *Izbrannye trudy*, 372–74.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pls. LXV–LXVII.

²¹ L. Aḡišan, *Širak tetagrutiwn patkerac'oyc'* (Venice, 1881), 136; Manuč'aryan, *K'nmut'yun Hayastani*, 90.

²² Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 1: fig. 35.

²³ T'oramanyan, *Nyut'er*, 2:127–56.

²⁴ A. Šahinyan, *K'asati bazilikayi čartarapetut'yunē* (Erevan, 1955), 101–14.

²⁵ Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture*, 1: microfiche 021, pls. C9–D5.

In spite of these reservations, this group of band inscriptions possesses several common features. Each comprises a single line of text which stretched counterclockwise around the exterior walls of the church. The surviving photographs indicate that the inscriptions were legible from ground level, implying that this was by design. Those that can be deciphered all commemorate the foundation of that church by a named individual in a specified year. It is important to stress that these churches were located in different districts of historic Armenia, that they were constructed at different times during the early medieval period, and that their inscriptions commemorate unrelated sponsors. Therefore their common characteristics cannot be explained as a regional style, as the product of a particular time or a particular sponsor. Collectively they attest a long-standing tradition in Armenia of carving band inscriptions at a high level on external walls. By virtue of their location and layout—and thus independently of their content—these inscriptions should be accepted as original.

Frustratingly, efforts to trace the origin of this tradition have proved largely fruitless. Exterior band inscriptions are not found on churches across the Near East in late antiquity. The vast majority of foundation and other inscriptions are confined to door lintels or mosaic floors. Of course, one should remember that there are few late antique structures which survive to a sufficient height and that arguments from silence are at best inconclusive and at worst specious. Nevertheless, the dearth of corresponding inscriptions outside Armenia is striking. Two sixth-century band inscriptions found in Constantinople appear to constitute the nearest contemporary equivalents. The excavation of the church of St. Polyeuktos (ca. 524–527) revealed that the first half of the dedicatory epigram (lines 1–41) was carved as a single line of text at the height of the entablature on both sides of the nave.²⁶ The second half of the epigram (lines 42–76) was carved in the narthex on five separate tablets. The church of Sts. Sergius and Bacchus (ca. 527–534) likewise contains a single-line inscription encircling the interior of the church at the level of the entablature.²⁷ In terms of location and content, however, these two inscriptions are far removed from the Armenian tradition. Moving ahead to the end of the seventh century, both the outer and inner faces of the octagonal arcade within the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem carry original single-line Arabic inscriptions in mosaic. That on the outer face refers to the year A.H. 72 (691/692), although scholarly opinion remains divided on the question of whether this is the year in which construction began or was completed.²⁸ These inscriptions therefore reveal something of the interaction between viewer and layout and the context in which the inscription should be interpreted. The text can be read only by walking around the outer and inner faces. In this instance, the layout of the inscription dictated ceremonial movement within the building. Again the Armenian tradition can be distinguished on the basis of location and content. In this instance, however, it is worth noting

²⁶ R. M. Harrison, *Excavations at Saraçhane in Istanbul*, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1986), 1:3–8, 117–19, 407–11 and pls. 87–88, 91, and 93–105.

²⁷ C. Mango, "The Church of St. Sergius and Bacchus at Constantinople," *JÖB* 21 (1972): 190.

²⁸ S. S. Blair, "What Is the Date of the Dome of the Rock?" in *Bayt al-Maqdis, 'Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem*, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art 9, part 1, ed. J. Raby and J. Johns (Oxford, 1992), 59–87. The inscription on the outer face concludes with the statement: "The servant of God built this dome 'Ab[d al-Malik commander] of the faithful in the year 72, may God accept it from him and be pleased with him. Amen. The Lord of the Worlds. Praise belongs to God."

that the exterior of the Dome of the Rock originally carried mosaics as well.²⁹ The remains of these were replaced with tiles by Sulaymān the Magnificent between 1545 and 1552. Sheila Blair has suggested that one of their purposes may have been to direct pilgrims to enter through the south door, where they would be confronted with the opening section of the inscription on the outer ambulatory.³⁰ Such a message, however, need not have been communicated via a band inscription or indeed in verbal form, and the reconstruction of the original exterior proposed by H. R. Allen does not provide for an inscription.³¹

The earliest example of a non-Armenian external band inscription appears to be the Georgian inscription carved in the third quarter of the eighth century on the exterior of the church of Sion at Samšvildē (Šamšwilde), southwest of Tblisi.³² Although the church is located in a district of historic Iberia rather than Armenia, it is less than fifty miles from Ojun, whose Armenian band inscription was discussed previously. A direct link between the Armenian tradition and this Georgian inscription seems very likely, even if the nature and circumstances of that connection remain obscure. By contrast, the earliest Byzantine external band inscription is much later, dating from the second half of the ninth century. The external face of the central apse of the church of the Virgin at Skripou contains a series of eight panels in a single continuous band, inscribed with the prayer of the donor, Leo *basilikos protospatharios* and *epi ton oikeiakon*, to the Virgin.³³ This foundation is dated by an exterior panel inscription on the north wall to the year 6382 since the creation of the world, which equates to the year 873/874.³⁴ A second, separate inscription, commemorating the dedication of a church to the Mother of God by Constantine Lips in Constantinople in June 907, fits the same pattern. It was located on a beveled marble cornice which girdled the exterior of the three central apses of the northern church of this monastic complex.³⁵ Thus both these Greek band inscriptions were confined to the external surface of the apse. When the gulf of some two centuries is also considered, a direct association between the Armenian and Byzantine traditions becomes less rather than more probable. In late antiquity, the external band inscription stretching across two or more elevations constituted a uniquely Armenian tradition.

The inspiration for the external band inscription will always be a matter of speculation. However, several observations may be advanced. First, this epigraphic tradition is consistent with the unmistakable Armenian preference for exterior carved decoration,

²⁹ Blair, "Date of the Dome of the Rock," 70; H. R. Allen, "Observations on the Original Appearance of the Dome of the Rock," in *Bayt al-Maqdis. Jerusalem and Early Islam*, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art 9, part 2, ed. J. Johns (Oxford, 1999), 197, 208–9.

³⁰ Blair, "Date of the Dome of the Rock," 76.

³¹ Allen, "Observations," 208–9 and color pl. at 202–3.

³² N. Chubinashvili, *Samshvildskii Sion* (Tbilisi, 1969), 28 and n. 35. Chubinashvili reproduces the reconstruction proposed by L. Muskhelishvili, "Nadpisi Samshvildskogo Siona i vopros vremeni ego postroeniia," *Izvestiia Instituta Iazyka Istorii i Materialnoi Kul'tury im Akad. N. Ia. Marra* 13 (1942): 92. According to Muskhelishvili, the total length of the inscription around the façade originally exceeded 26 m. I am very grateful to Professor J.-P. Mahé for drawing my attention to this inscription. Professor R. W. Thomson has kindly supplied an English translation of this reconstruction; see note 106 below.

³³ N. Oikonomidès, "Pour une nouvelle lecture des inscriptions de Skripou," *TM* 12 (1994): 479–93 and pls. I–IV; A. Papalexandrou, "Text in Context: Eloquent Monuments and the Byzantine Beholder," *Word & Image* 17.3 (2001): 266–67 and figs. 5 and 6.

³⁴ Oikonomidès, "Skripou," 482–83 and pl. III.

³⁵ T. Macridy, A. H. S. Megaw, C. Mango, and E. J. W. Hawkins, "The Monastery of Lips (Fenari Isa Camii) at Istanbul," *DOP* 18 (1964): 254–55, 300–301, and fig. 1.

particularly around the frames of both windows and doors.³⁶ Indeed, one could argue that the horizontal band of text gives a certain unity to the exterior of the building, linking the separate decorated surfaces. This is most obvious on those structures whose windows or door frames break up the continuity of the text. Second, since these are all foundation inscriptions, there can be no doubt that their location and layout were planned. Their position was not dictated by existing inscriptions or decoration. Instead it reflects a deliberate choice. This leads to the third observation. At first sight, the single band of text is not an obvious mechanism for a public declaration of ownership and responsibility. It requires the viewer to walk around the structure. Therefore, as at the Dome of the Rock, the location and layout of the inscription tell us something about the demands upon, and the response expected from, the literate viewer or accompanying listener. This prompts the question: in what circumstances would anyone walk around the exterior of the church reading the whole inscription, and so, by implication, praying to God for intercession?³⁷ In my view, it is very significant that two of the four band inscriptions, those at Bagaran (A.3) and Bagavan (A.5), as well as two other foundation inscriptions, at Mastara (A.10.4) and Aruč (A.11), all specify the day and the month on which the church was completed.³⁸ This pattern suggests that such inscriptions may have played some role in an annual service of commemoration for the founders of the church during which a circumambulation of the building took place. Such a service would have fulfilled the ongoing mediatory role of the building on behalf of the souls of its founders. Unfortunately this attractive solution is undermined by the inscription at Ałaman (A.4) which does not specify any particular month or day. Moreover, it does not explain the height of the band inscriptions. Was this intended to have a purely practical benefit, protecting the inscription from defacement in the future? The fragmentary nature of the relatively low inscriptions at Elvard and Ojun supports this proposition. Was it intended to elevate the inscription above the world, and by implication closer to God, who would be reminded of the founders' concern for their souls when contemplating the community of the faithful assembled within? Or was it a tradition which derived from similar practices in relation to smaller precious objects and

³⁶ The biblical inspiration for this decoration has been noted: see P. Donabédian, "Thèmes bibliques et sculpture pré-arabe," *REArm* 22 (1990–91): 253–314, esp. 275–82; and F. B. Flood, *The Great Mosque of Damascus: Studies on the Makings of an Umayyad Visual Culture* (Leiden, 2001), 57–113, esp. 71 and 79, where the biblical precedents behind Armenian vine and pomegranate exterior carved decoration are traced. See, for example, Isa. 5:7 which explicitly associates the children of Israel, the people of God, with the vine.

³⁷ Papalexandrou, "Text in Context," 274–83.

³⁸ Bagaran (A.3): 20 Trē; Bagavan (A.5): 30 Hrotic'; Mastara (A.10.4): 14 Arac'; Aruč (A.11): 15 Mareri. By way of comparison, the History of Yovhannēs Draxanakertc'i contains four similar dates, specifying a particular day and month: see Yovhannēs Draxanakertc'i [John Catholicos], *Yovhannu kat'otikosī Draxanakertec'woy Patmut'wn Hayoc'*, ed. M. Emin (Moscow, 1853; repr. Tiflis, 1912; Delmar, N.Y., 1980), 125, lines 9–10 (25 Mehekan), 254.10–11 (25 Mareri), 350.27–351.1 (10 Ahik), and 353.12 (17 Ahik); trans. and commentary by K. H. Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs Draxanakertc'i. History of Armenia*, Occasional Papers and Proceedings 3 (Atlanta, 1987), 25.70, 51.42, 66.62, and 66.73. These precise dates are all found at the conclusions of accounts detailing the sufferings of faithful Armenian martyrs. It seems to me very likely that such passages were included in, and derived from, the annual liturgical cycle. This would justify the inclusion of a specific date (for the purposes of commemoration) as well as their intriguing combination of vivid, self-contained narratives with lengthy prayers. These narratives were preserved and transmitted through the liturgy as Armenian examples of Christian fortitude in the face of oppression. Specific dates appear in other medieval Armenian historical texts in exactly the same position and context, implying that the liturgical cycle was used as a source of historical information by contemporary writers.

manufactures? Although the reason for their elevated position remains unknown, it seems very likely that the band inscription had a role in recording the exact date on which the church was completed and hence the day on which its founders were to be commemorated each year. Such celebrations would have been particular to the individual church and need not have been reflected in the annual liturgical cycle of the Armenian Church.

One final observation should be made on the location of the band inscriptions. There appears to be a broad coincidence between those surfaces carrying the band inscriptions and those that are pierced by doorways. At Etvard it is the southern elevation, possessing no fewer than three separate entrances, that carries the inscription. At Bagaran (A.3) the first part of the inscription stretched around the western, southern, and eastern elevations in that order; the entrances into this church were to be found along the western and southern walls. The inscription at Ałaman (A.4) covered the southern and part of the eastern elevation; the southern entrance seems to have been the principal entrance, judging by its size and decoration in comparison to the western doorway. At Bagavan (A.5) the inscription extended across the southern and eastern sides and may have extended onto the northern elevation as well; this church had five entrances, two of which were located on its southern and northern sides. On the basis of these examples, the southern elevation seems to be favored in Armenian church design, both in terms of access into the church and in the location of the band inscription. Although conjectural, this preference may reflect the presence of adjacent structures to the south of the church, structures that currently await discovery or further excavation. At the present time, little is known of the architectural context in which many of the surviving Armenian churches were originally situated, but this might explain this preference. It is significant that the partial excavation of the area around the church at Aruč has revealed a palace located immediately south of the church, aligned to facilitate access between the two.³⁹

Before advancing to consider Strzygowski's second category, "Ersatzinschriften" or "substitute inscriptions," we should note that there is another group of inscriptions which should be accepted as original by virtue of their position. It comprises those foundation inscriptions located on the western façade of each church immediately below the level of the roof, carved as three or four lines of text onto a single row of blocks. Two inscriptions qualify, those at Mren (A.7) and T'alin (A.12). The Mren inscription consists of three lines of text, whereas that at T'alin is spread across four lines. It is very unlikely that anyone would choose to carve unrelated inscriptions in this similar, difficult location onto different buildings other than at the time of original construction. Indeed, the damage sustained to the inscription at Mren through the subsequent carving of medieval *xačkars* confirms the priority and antiquity of the inscription. Once again, both inscriptions appear to be directly associated with the main entrance of each church. The lintel of the western doorway of the church at Mren is decorated with an elaborate relief, depicting the Armenian donors of the church flanking Christ, St. Peter, and St. Paul.⁴⁰ This western orientation distinguishes these two inscriptions from the band inscriptions whose southerly preference was noted above. It also links them to the Byzantine epigraphic tradition, which favored the western elevation. The western orientation of the main entrance and

³⁹ A. Khatchatrian, *L'architecture arménienne du IV^e au VI^e siècle*, Bibliothèque des Cahiers Archéologiques 7 (Paris, 1971), 63–64 and fig. 75.

⁴⁰ N. and J.-M. Thierry, "La cathédrale de Mren," 57–69 and figs. 13–19.

foundation inscription at both these churches may therefore reflect the political—and perhaps the doctrinal—affiliation of their founders. Both inscriptions attest an impressive array of prestigious Byzantine titles bestowed upon the respective founders. Moreover, the relief carved onto the lintel of the northern doorway of the church at Mren depicts the return of the True Cross to Jerusalem by Emperor Heraclius on 21 March 630, an overtly imperial theme without any obvious Armenian connotation.⁴¹ When considered together, these elements suggest that the church at Mren was intended to reflect its sponsor's support for Heraclius. However, in the context of Armenian dedicatory inscriptions, it should be noted that this western orientation is atypical. Indeed, traditional Armenian practice persisted into the eleventh century. The original foundation inscription of the cathedral at Ani commemorating the benefaction by Queen Katranidē and the completion of the building in 1001 is located on its southern façade.⁴² Intriguingly the later public inscription commissioned by the Byzantine *magistros* and *katepan* of the East, Bagrat Vxkac'i, in the reign of Constantine X Doukas (1059–67) appears on the western elevation.⁴³ This clear distinction between the Armenian and Byzantine epigraphic traditions in relation to the preferred orientation of the inscription endured into the eleventh century.

In accepting the foundation inscription at Mren (A.7) as original and placing it in a separate group, together with the inscription at T'alin (A.12), Strzygowski's second category, "substitute inscriptions," is reduced to two examples, those at Tekor (A.1) and Mastara (A.10.1–4). The former was located in the architrave above the tympanum of the western entrance of the church. However, as Strzygowski and others have observed, the inscription is not only cramped but also can only be understood when read in reverse, from the last line of text upward.⁴⁴ A. Khatchatrian concluded: "La seule explication de cette inversion de l'inscription et de son insertion maladroite sur l'architrave est que, dans l'état où elle s'était conservée, elle présentait comme les [autres] inscriptions du tympan, une copie de l'inscription originale, exécutée en dernier lieu."⁴⁵ Furthermore, a close reading of the inscription confirms that it is in fact composite, being made up of two separate elements. The first refers to Sahak Kamsarakan building a *vkayaran* or martyrion of St. Sahak, asserting a mediatory function for him and his wife and family; the second describes how this *tetis* or site was founded by Yohan the kat'olikos of Armenia in conjunction with three other named individuals. According to T'oramanyan, these two parts cannot be combined within a single original inscription and should therefore be interpreted as separate inscriptions deriving from separate structures.⁴⁶

The inscriptions examined hitherto are all singular in the sense that each occupies a single unbroken sequence of blocks. The Armenian inscriptions found on the church at Mastara deviate from this pattern. No fewer than four separate inscriptions collectively attest the dedication of the church (A.10.1–4). Although they consistently identify one

⁴¹ Ibid., 69–76 and figs. 28–33. See also N. Thierry, "Héraclius et la vraie croix en Arménie," in *From Byzantium to Iran: Armenian Studies in Honour of Nina G. Garsoïan*, ed. J.-P. Mahé and R. W. Thomson (Atlanta, 1997), 165–86.

⁴² *Divan hay vimagrut'yun* (hereafter *DVH*), ed. H. A. Orbeli, S. Barxudaryan, and S. A. Avagyan, 7 vols. (Erevan, 1960–82), 1: no. 101 and pl. XIII.

⁴³ *DHV* 1: no. 106 and pl. XII.

⁴⁴ Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 1:39–41.

⁴⁵ Khatchatrian, *L'architecture arménienne*, 50.

⁴⁶ T'oramanyan, *Nyut'er*, 1:218–20.

Grigoras as the founder of the church, they are found at different places on the exterior. Following the sequence used by Manuċ'aryan, the first (A.10.1) is carved onto a single block located immediately above the window over the entrance into the southern apse of the church, although the inscription also continues around the semicircular frame of the window.⁴⁷ The second (A.10.2) is found in the upper register of the southern section of the western elevation, again above the level of the window. Seven lines of text cover three rows of blocks. Once again, it appears that the engraver encountered difficulty fitting the end of the inscription into the available space. He therefore carved two lines of text onto the southern face of the western apse, perpendicular to the original surface, at the level of the bottom row of carved blocks. In other words, the carver was forced to move across to the surface adjacent and to the left of the original surface in order to complete the inscription. The third inscription (A.10.3) is located above the window and the doorway of the western apse. It is carved onto two blocks, one on top of the other. The six lines of text on the upper block have been squeezed into the space on either side of a carved cross, suggesting that the cross predates the inscription. The second block is much longer and carries five lines of text, but these again appear cramped. Finally, the fourth inscription (A.10.4), supplying the month and day of the consecration of the church, is positioned on the western section of the southern elevation. It comprises four lines of text carved onto a single block, and one further line of text, carved onto the adjacent block, level with the bottom line of text on the previous block. Unlike the three other inscriptions, this is clearly incomplete because it lacks the name of the bishop who was commemorated on the same day as the consecration of the church.

How should we interpret the location of these inscriptions on the church at Mastara? They are concentrated around the two entrances to the church and the external vertical surfaces between them. Furthermore, they are located high up on the exterior, above the level of the windows. In these respects, one can detect clear correspondences with the groups of inscriptions described above. Their layout is more difficult to explain, appearing cramped and hard to read. These features are typical of substitute inscriptions. Yet it is hard to envisage the circumstances in which they were all recarved with such diligence onto separate inaccessible surfaces. Although the three principal Mastara inscriptions appear poorly planned and often compressed, I am not convinced that this is sufficient reason to dismiss them as substitute. Their originality must remain an open question.

The authenticity of the wording is less contentious. Although the use of four separate and different inscriptions to commemorate the foundation of the church has not been encountered previously, this practice should be compared with the two separate and different inscriptions recording the role of Komitas in the construction of the church of St. Hrip'simē in Eĵmiacin (A.2.1–2). The first of these is located on the exterior surface of the western elevation and refers to Komitas as a sacristan of St. Hrip'simē who was summoned to the throne of St. Grigor; it therefore attests his role in the construction of the church. The second is positioned on the interior surface of the eastern elevation and refers to Komitas as *kat'olikos* of Armenia; it also invokes Christ, asking him to remember Komitas.⁴⁸ Thus the two inscriptions have different temporal dimensions and fulfill different functions. The first is pragmatic, recording the past career of Komitas, his appointment, and his personal responsibility for the construction; the second presents Komitas as the

⁴⁷ Manuċ'aryan, *K'nnut'yun Hayastani*, 53–54.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 77–80.

current kat'olikos and implores Christ to recognize his labors. In much the same way, each inscription at Mastara has its own unique purpose. The first (A.10.1) intercedes for Grigoras as well as dating the construction of the church through the association with Bishop T'eodoros. The second (A.10.2) expresses Grigoras's thanks to God for granting him the opportunity to build the church, as well as his subsequent appointment as bishop of Apahunik'.⁴⁹ It also defines the function of the church in four different ways: as a refuge for Mastara itself, as a place of prayer for the faithful, a place of expiation for sinners, and a memorial for Grigoras and his unspecified relatives. The third (A.10.3) recalls the relationship between Christ and his church, portrayed as the bride of Christ.⁵⁰ It also refers obliquely to the dedication of the church to St. Yovhannēs, the apostle, prophet, and martyr, who is the "companion of the bridegroom," Christ himself. Finally, the fourth inscription (A.10.4) records the month and day of consecration, thereby setting the date for an annual service of commemoration. Collectively, therefore, these inscriptions reveal a wealth of information about the foundation of the church at Mastara. They attest a tradition of multiple dedicatory inscriptions which need to be read together in order to obtain the fullest meaning. The two inscriptions at the church of St. Hrip'simē belong to the same tradition.

The third and final category proposed by Strzygowski, "Mehrzeilige Flächan-[oder Felder-]inschriften," has been reduced by the earlier separation of the inscriptions at Mren (A.7) and T'alin (A.12) into their own category. The solitary panel inscription of the early medieval period is found inserted into the eastern wall of the church at Aruč (A.11). Although doubts were expressed by both Orbeli and Strzygowski over the originality of this inscription, on the grounds that it refers to the seemingly impossible "29th year of Constans," this is not sufficient reason to dismiss it.⁵¹ In much the same way that silver coins bearing the name and representation of Yazkert III persisted in the former Sasanian Empire long after his death, so it is conceivable that a dating mechanism based on the regnal years of Constans II continued to be employed after his murder in distant Sicily, especially if there was no alternative annual cycle in use in Armenia at that time.⁵² The unusual dimensions of the single panel, different from those of the surrounding revetment leaves, support the contention that it is original.

The remaining Armenian inscriptions from Armenia are scattered across different surfaces in various ways and do not conform to any of the above patterns. In light of the fact that none of them comprises a foundation inscription, this is not surprising. The unique inscription at Avan (A.6), with its remarkable combination of Armenian and Greek words, interspersed with Armenian cryptograms, was carved onto the exterior of the eastern elevation.⁵³ The solitary Armenian inscription found at Zvart'noc' (A.9) was carved onto a sundial which was unearthed in the course of excavation. The funerary inscription from Naxčavan/Noramanuk (A.13) was carved on a tombstone in one of two underground

⁴⁹ The syntax of the inscription—and specifically the use of the instrumental *մով լի*—suggests that his appointment was consequent to, and dependent upon, the foundation of the church.

⁵⁰ John 3:29.

⁵¹ Orbeli, *Izbrannye trudy*, 401–4; Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 1:46–49.

⁵² This contention is examined below.

⁵³ K. Łafadaryan, *Erevan. Miġnadaryan hušarjannerē ev vimakan arjanagrut'yunnerē* (Erevan, 1975), 190. The cryptograms are based on the numerical values attached to each letter of the Armenian alphabet, exchanging those letters representing 1–9 with 1000–9000 and 10–90 with 100–900. This system resembles the Coptic "Era of Diocletian," used until long after his reign.

vaulted crypts.⁵⁴ Finally, Uxtaytur's inscription (A.14), recording the provision of a water source, is located on two adjacent blocks on the southwestern pier inside the cathedral church at T'alin.⁵⁵

In summary, the dedicatory inscriptions at Bagaran (A.3), Ałaman (A.4), Bagavan (A.5), Mren (A.7), Naxčavan (A.8), and T'alin (A.12) should be accepted as original by virtue of their location and layout alone, independently of any palaeographical comparison. Furthermore, there is no reason to question the authenticity of those inscriptions at Hrip'simē (A.2.1–2), Avan (A.6), Zvart'noc' (A.9), Aruč (A.11), Naxčavan/Noramanuk (A.13), and T'alin/Uxtaytur (A.14) on the basis of their location. It seems likely that at least three of the inscriptions at Mastara should be accepted as original (A.10.1–3), although the compressed nature of their layout challenges this proposition. Only the composite inscription at Tekor (A.1) has been shown to be a substitute or replacement inscription.

The second test relies on palaeographical comparison. The results can be summarized succinctly. M. E. Stone reviewed the studies undertaken by G. Yovsēp'ean and A. G. Abrahamyan and traced the development of certain letter forms: ayb [𐌐], za [𐌑], t'o [𐌒], ho [𐌓], and vew [𐌔].⁵⁶ In the course of this research, Stone accepted the originality of the inscriptions at Tekor (A.1), Hrip'simē (A.2.1–2), Bagavan (A.5), Zvart'noc' (A.9), Mastara (A.10.1), Aruč (A.11), Naxčavan/Noramanuk (A.13), and T'alin/Uxtaytur (A.14). Previously, Yovsēp'ean had accepted that the inscriptions at Mren (A.7) and T'alin (A.12) were genuine, including them in his album of Armenian palaeography. More recently K. Łafadaryan has argued that the letter forms of the Avan inscription (A.6) indicate a seventh-century date.⁵⁷ Thus the majority of the inscriptions in Armenian within this corpus have been accepted by palaeographers as genuine. Furthermore, those that were not considered by these palaeographers—Bagaran, Ałaman, and Naxčavan—all passed the first diagnostic test, being band inscriptions. When viewed collectively, the results of these two tests confirm the originality of eighteen Armenian inscriptions, found on fourteen structures.

Unlike several of the Armenian inscriptions discussed above, the authenticity of the Greek and Arabic inscriptions found in Armenia has never been challenged. The inscription at Mastara (A.15) has traditionally been read as a simple date, referring to the twenty-first year of King Peroz (A.D. 480). F. V. Shelov-Kovediaev has argued, however, that the two words should be interpreted as names, Περóζ(ης) and (Λε)οντάκ(ης).⁵⁸ This revision sidesteps the issue of why a fifth-century Persian regnal year should be expressed in Greek on a mid-seventh-century structure and why Peroz is titled ἄρχων rather than βασιλεύς. The remaining Greek inscriptions included in this corpus are undated but all appear to originate in the early medieval period. The fragmentary inscription at Ereroyk' (A.16) has been dated on palaeographical grounds to not later than the seventh century.⁵⁹ Intriguingly, it was carved at the eastern edge of the southern façade and so fits into the familiar

⁵⁴ Ałışan, *Širak*, 136. In 1983 Thierry reported that this had been broken up by local villagers in the mistaken belief that it concealed buried treasure; see J.-M. Thierry, "À propos de quelques monuments chrétiens du vilayet de Kars (III)," *REArm* 17 (1983): 353–57 and figs. 33–36.

⁵⁵ Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture*, 1: microfiche 070, pl. C2.

⁵⁶ Yovsēp'ean, *Grč'ut'ean*, 3–11; Abrahamyan, *Hayoc' gir ev grč'ut'yun*, 80–88; Stone, *Sinai*, 9–18.

⁵⁷ Łafadaryan, *Erevan*, 190–91.

⁵⁸ F. V. Shelov-Kovediaev, "Zametki po grecheskoj epigrafike Armenii," *IFZh* (1986) 1: 66–68.

⁵⁹ Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 1:31 and fig. 32; Khatchatrian, *L'architecture arménienne*, 45.

pattern discerned above. The terse declaration of responsibility by Nersēs for the construction of Zvart'noc' (A.18) was described by Strzygowski as being located on the eastern side of the outer wall, although it is unclear whether this was its original position.⁶⁰ Since several capitals from this church are decorated with monograms of Nersēs, devised in Greek rather than Armenian and read as Καθολικοῦ Ναρσοῦ, "of Catholicos Narses," there can be little doubt that this Greek inscription is also original.⁶¹ It is significant, therefore, that whereas the church at Avan bears a single bilingual Armenian/Greek inscription from the time of the kat'olikos Ezr (A.6), the church at Zvart'noc' constructed by Ezr's immediate successor, Nersēs, originally carried Greek and Armenian inscriptions as well. The use of both languages was clearly deliberate and seems to reflect the political and doctrinal inclinations of both kat'olikoi; both are castigated for associating with the emperors Heraclius and Constans II and accepting the perceived heretical views of the Greek church.⁶² This issue will be discussed in greater detail below. Finally, the four inscriptions from Ējmiacin are located in a relief on the northern façade of the cathedral.⁶³ One is divided into two parts, flanking the lower register of a circular medallion (A.17.a and b). A third is located in a *tabula ansata* (A.17.c), and the fourth (A.17.d) forms the medallion encircling a cross and ends within its bars.⁶⁴ Khatchatrian attributed them all to the fifth century, and there seems no reason to challenge his view.⁶⁵

In contrast to the Greek inscriptions, two of the four relevant Arabic inscriptions contain specific *hijra* dates: A.H. 154 (770/771) and A.H. 170 (786/787).⁶⁶ The two undated Arabic inscriptions are located immediately below the dated Arabic inscription at Zvart'noc' (A.19). Given their close proximity to the first, Xaç'atryan treated all three as a single inscription.⁶⁷ However, in my view, three separate inscriptions can be distinguished. Not only does the second, middle inscription contain a separate, though incomplete *hijra* date; there are also differences in the style and inclination of the script as well as a large space between the second and third inscriptions. Dr. Robert Hoyland has examined these inscriptions from a palaeographical perspective and concluded that they all date from the eighth century. There does not appear to be any discernible pattern to the location of these Arabic inscriptions: those at Zvart'noc' were written onto the plaster surface of a column, indicating an internal rather than external location, whereas that at Aruč (A.20) was carved onto the exterior of the northern wall. However, their location is secondary when set against their very existence. The carving of Arabic inscriptions onto prominent Armenian churches in the second half of the eighth century raises a number of intriguing

⁶⁰ Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 1:30–31 and fig. 30.

⁶¹ S. Der Nersessian, *L'art arménien* (Paris, 1977), fig. 30; Shelov-Kovediaev, "Zametki," 68–69.

⁶² T. W. Greenwood, "Sasanian Echoes and Apocalyptic Expectations: A Re-evaluation of the Armenian History Attributed to Sebeos," *Le Muséon* 115 (2002): 3–4: 361–63 and nn. 150, 152, and 159.

⁶³ Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture*, 7: microfiche 159, pl. B5.

⁶⁴ Although the relief contains inscriptions that could have been excluded on the grounds of relevance, collectively the four inscriptions merit inclusion.

⁶⁵ Khatchatrian, *L'architecture arménienne*, 67–68.

⁶⁶ Xaç'atryan's corpus contains a second Arabic inscription from Zvart'noc' which purportedly bears the date A.H. 159; see A. A. Xaç'atryan, *Korpus Arabskikh nadpisyev Armeni VIII–XVI vv.* (Erevan, 1987), no. 7 and pl. v. Dr. R. Hoyland has reexamined the plate and reads the year as A.H. 257 (870/871). This inscription has therefore been excluded from this corpus. Following Hoyland, the purportedly 8th-century Arabic inscription from Bagavan (Xaç'atryan, *Korpus*, no. 52 and pl. XXIII) contains the date A.H. 871 and not A.H. 171.

⁶⁷ Xaç'atryan, *Korpus*, no. 6 and pl. IV.

questions about the ownership or control of these principal ecclesiastical centers as well as Arab administration and settlement.

Finally, the mosaic Armenian inscriptions from Jerusalem have all been dated to the early medieval period—late fifth, sixth, or seventh centuries—on the basis of their content and the style of the accompanying representations and/or border decoration. Palaeographical analysis supports this broad contention. Two mosaics have attracted more specific comment. The inscription marking the resting place of the body of “Šušannan mother of Artawan” (B.2) has been associated more precisely with the first half of the sixth century, on the basis that Artawan has been identified as the Armenian general Artabanus who occupied several key military commands under Justinian in Africa, Constantinople, and Thrace.⁶⁸ On the balance of probabilities, this association seems less rather than more likely. Second, the mosaic commissioned by Ewstat’ (B.6) has been dated on the evidence of a coin discovered in its mortar bed, tentatively identified as “Byzantino-Arab” and attributed to the mid-seventh century.⁶⁹ Again there is no reason to question the early medieval dates attributed to these inscriptions.

LOCATION IN TIME

Eight of the eighteen Armenian inscriptions located in Armenia contain specific dates. These dates are expressed in several different ways. Collectively they repay close investigation because they chart important changes in the chronological systems employed in Armenia. They illustrate how contemporaries orientated themselves in time, and specifically in whose time they envisaged that they were living. At the same time, they invite comparison with chronological references in literary works dating, or purporting to date from, the same period.

Before tracing these chronological developments, there is one characteristic common to all these dated inscriptions: the date is always placed at the beginning of the inscription. In isolation, this feature is of little consequence; however, in the context of late antique epigraphy in the Near East, it is very distinctive. The vast majority of inscriptions originating within the Byzantine Empire locate the date at the end of the inscription rather than at the beginning. Again, therefore, this corpus of Armenian inscriptions does not fit neatly into the mainstream Byzantine epigraphic tradition.

The earliest surviving date occurs in the Bagaran inscription (A.3) and is calculated by reference to the regnal years of Xosrov II.⁷⁰ Thus the church was founded in the “thirty-fourth year of King Xosrov,” and But Ariuelean was murdered in Xosrov’s thirty-eighth year.⁷¹ Although this dating mechanism is not found in any other inscription, it is used

⁶⁸ Artabanus 2: *PLRE* 3A: 125–30. He was appointed *magister militum per Africam* in 546, *magister militum praesentalis* and *comes foederatorum* following his return to Constantinople in 546, offices he held until 549 when he was implicated in a plot to depose Justinian. However, within a year he had been restored to favor and was appointed *magister militum per Thraciam*, an office he occupied between 550 and 554, after which he disappears from view. Intriguingly he seems to have spent the duration of his final command in Sicily and Italy rather than in Thrace. It is instructive to note that Artabanus 1, who fought at the battle of Hippis in 549, was thus a direct contemporary of Artabanus 2.

⁶⁹ M. E. Stone, “The New Armenian Inscriptions from Jerusalem,” in *Armenian Perspectives*, ed. N. Awde (Richmond, 1997), 264.

⁷⁰ Although the short Greek inscription at Mastara (A.15) appears to supply a Persian regnal year from the 5th century, for the reasons outlined, this reading cannot be relied upon as secure.

⁷¹ Year 34: 19 June 622–18 June 623; year 38: 18 June 626–17 June 627.

consistently in the History attributed to Sebeos. Of the twenty specific dates found in that text, no fewer than fourteen are based exclusively upon Persian regnal years.⁷² Admittedly the precise wording of these dates is not consistent, implying that they derive from more than one underlying source, but it is clear that this was the preferred chronology in use in Armenia before 630.⁷³ The same pattern emerges from those chapters in book 2 of the *History of Atuank'* which describe the devastation experienced by the region of Caucasian Albania between 624 and 630.⁷⁴ These chapters contain four specific dates, all of which have been calculated by reference to Persian regnal years.⁷⁵ Finally, a solitary extant colophon attached to a miscellany copied in the thirteenth century states that Eznak translated this book in the "Twenty-ninth year of Xosrov, king of kings, son of Ormizd."⁷⁶ Consistent recourse to Persian regnal years in these primary sources before 628 is unsurprising, given that three-quarters of historic Armenia and the whole of Atuank' had been integrated into the Sasanian Empire for more than two centuries.

However, the deposition and murder of Xosrov II in February 628 precipitated a period of sustained political instability within the Persian Empire, as a succession of rival claimants challenged one another for the throne and ruled, sometimes consecutively, sometimes concurrently, in different regions of the empire.⁷⁷ This in turn provoked political and chronological chaos in Armenia, echoes of which can still be discerned within the Bagaran inscription (A.3). In the first place, the completion of the church is dated uniquely in terms of an event referred to previously in the inscription, namely, the death of But Aruelean; the text refers to the church being finished "three years" after his murder, rather than by reference to the regnal year of a Persian king. More importantly, the inscription locates this event in time by employing a synchronism based upon several Armenian figures; it refers to a time when Varaztiroc' *aspet* was *marzpan*, when Vahan Arielean was lord, and when an unknown figure, almost certainly a cleric and probably the local bishop, had responsibility for oversight or administration (the Armenian word *hogabarjut'iwn* implies an ecclesiastical authority). Nor is this an isolated example. The inscriptions at Ałaman (A.4) and Mren (A.7), dating from 636/637 and probably 639/640 respectively, also employed synchronisms, and book 2, chapter 50 of the *History of Atuank'* opens with a complex

⁷² Sebeos, *Patmut'iwn Sebēosi*, ed. G. V. Abgaryan (Erevan, 1979), 67, line 2 (Xosrov I); 94.11, 100.3, 104.6, 106.8, 111.11, 111.32, 112.9, 112.29, 112.31, 115.28, 121.5, and 123.15 (Xosrov II); 163.29 (Yazkert III); trans. and historical commentary by R. W. Thomson and J. D. Howard-Johnston, *The Armenian History Attributed to Sebeos*, 2 vols., Translated Texts for Historians 31 (Liverpool, 1999).

⁷³ Compare Sebeos, 111.32: "in the twenty-first year of king Xosrov," with Sebeos, 115.28: "on the 19th day in the month Margac', which was the 28th day of the month, in the 25th year of Apruēz Xosrov."

⁷⁴ *Movsēs Katankatuac'i: Patmut'iwn Atuanic' Ašxarhi*, ed. V. Aṛak'elyan (Erevan, 1983), 127.4–149.14; trans. C. J. F. Dowsett, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movsēs Dasxuranc'i*, London Oriental Series 8 (London, 1961), 75–92. Although the *History of Atuank'* has been attributed to Movsēs Dasxuranc'i or Movsēs Katankatuac'i, neither attribution is secure and it remains an anonymous composition.

⁷⁵ *Patmut'iwn Atuanic'*, 128.10, 135.5, 140.17, and 142.8; Dowsett, *Caucasian Albanians*, 76, 83, 86, and 87.

⁷⁶ A. S. Mat'evosyan, *Hayeren jeragrevi hišatakaranner* (5–12 dd.) (Erevan, 1988), no. 19. This is similar to one of the regnal formulae employed in *Patmut'iwn Atuanic'*: "in the month Mehekan, in the 35th year of Xosrov Ormizdean, king of kings of Persia"; see *Patmut'iwn At-uanic'*, 128.10; Dowsett, *Caucasian Albanians*, 76.

⁷⁷ Sebeos, 129.22–130.34; al-Ṭabarī, *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa-al-mulūk*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, 13 vols. (Leiden, 1879–1901), 1:1045–67; trans. and commentary by C. E. Bosworth, *The History of al-Ṭabarī Volume V: The Sāsānids, the Byzantines, the Lakmids, and Yemen* (New York, 1999), 381–410. A. Christensen, *L'Iran sous les Sassanides* (Copenhagen, 1944), 498–500; D. Sellwood, P. Whiting, and R. Williams, *An Introduction to Sasanian Coins* (London, 1985), 159–74; H. M. Malek, "A Survey of Research on Sasanian Numismatics," *NC* 153 (1993): 238–40. Cf. W. E. Kaegi, *Heraclius, Emperor of Byzantium* (Cambridge, 2003), 184–85, 202–3, 212–13, and 258–59.

synchronism defining a point in time between June 632/633 and January 638.⁷⁸ This decade witnessed an important movement away from reliance upon Persian regnal years and toward individual synchronisms, devised through a combination of local and national figures, both secular and ecclesiastical. The selection of these figures was deliberate, reflecting the particular context in which the synchronism was created and thus explaining the lack of uniformity between them. As we shall see, the selection also intimates something of the hierarchy of power within the locality, as perceived by a contemporary. There is one striking omission from these synchronisms: the Armenian era dating system is not found in either of the historical texts specified above, nor in any of the seventh-century inscriptions.

The emergence of the synchronism was not the only significant development in this decade. Armenian inscriptions began to employ the regnal years of Heraclius, both in isolation, as at Bagavan (A.5), and as a constituent part of a synchronism, as at Ałaman (A.4) and Mren (A.7). Unlike the neutral references to Xosrov II discussed above, these three Armenian inscriptions accord Heraclius several very favorable epithets. Thus the Bagavan inscription describes Heraclius as *Ածապազ*, “protected by God”; at Ałaman he is *բարեպաշտ*, “pious,” and at Mren he is *բարեկալթող*, “victorious.” This positive assertion of the virtues of Heraclius is also a characteristic found in the key Armenian historical works which report this period. Although Heraclius is initially described simply as king or emperor in the History attributed to Sebeos, he is subsequently lauded as *երանելի աստուածասէր և երջանիկ*, “blessed, God-loving, and fortunate.”⁷⁹ Moreover, in the so-called “Defense of Armenian Orthodoxy,” addressed to his grandson Constans II, Heraclius is remembered as *աստուածասէր աստուածապաշտ աստուածաշնորհ քաջ և յաղթող փրկութենադործ երջանիկն Նրակլի*, “the God-loving, God-worshipping, God-given, the valiant and victorious, beneficent, fortunate Heraclius.”⁸⁰ In the *History of Atuank*,⁸¹ he is *Փլաւոս Հերակլի բրիտանասէր կայսերն*, “Flavius Heraclius the Christ-loving emperor.”⁸¹ Even the problematic opening of the History of Lewond presents Heraclius as *սաստուածապատկեալ և բարեպաշտ թագաւորին Հռոմոնց*, “God-crowned and pious king of the Romans.”⁸² The inscriptions therefore confirm in general terms the accuracy of these literary references; they indicate that highly favorable epithets were applied to Heraclius at the time.

⁷⁸ *Patmut'wn Atuanic*, 280.5–8: “In the reign of Heraclius and in the shattered kingship of the Persians of Yazkert, in the office of kat'otikos of Armenia of Ezr and in the office of *sparapet* of Mušet, in the lordship of Siwnik' of Grigor, in the office of bishop of Mat'usafay, and in the office of prince of Atuank' of Varaz Grigor, lord of Gardman . . .” The *terminus post quem* is supplied by the accession of Yazkert III, 16 June 632, and the *terminus ante quem* is fixed by the date of the battle of Qādisiyya, 6 January 638, at which both the *sparapet*, Mušet Mamikonean, and Grigor, *tēr* or lord of Siwnik', perished.

⁷⁹ Sebeos, 131.9–10.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 152.6–7.

⁸¹ *Patmut'wn Atuanic*, 128.14; Dowsett, *Caucasian Albanians*, 76. Although the epithet φιλόχριστος, “Christ-loving,” is not associated with Heraclius in any surviving regnal formula or inscription, an epitaph from Jerusalem dating from 592 has been reexamined by D. Feissel and read as follows: . . . βα[σιλ(είας)—Μαυρικίου τοῦ φιλ(ο)χ(ρίστο)υ ἔτους ια': D. Feissel, “La réforme chronologique de 537 et son application dans l'épigraphie grecque. Années de règne et dates consulaires de Justinien à Héraclius,” *Ktēma: Civilisations de l'Orient, de la Grèce et de Rome Antiques* 18 (1993): 186. Earlier, *P. Cair. Masp.* I 67009.1 (a petition) applies the epithet φιλόχριστος to the emperor.

⁸² Lewond, *Patmut'wn Lewondeay meci vardapeti Hayoc*, ed. K. Ezean (St. Petersburg, 1887), 3.8–9; trans. and commentary by Z. Arzoumanian, *History of Lewond the Eminent Vardapet of the Armenians* (Wynnewood, Pa., 1982), 48.

In my view, both the chronological mechanism and the positive epithets derive from the same source, namely, the regnal formulae of Heraclius employed in legal and official documents. These formulae have been preserved primarily in papyrus documents from Byzantine Egypt.⁸³ Not only do they specify the date in terms of the regnal year of Heraclius rather than by indiction or other chronological system; they also contain identical epithets, albeit in Greek rather than Armenian. Thus *Ածապազ* is the exact Armenian equivalent of *θεοφύλακτος*, “protected by God”; *բարեպաշտ* is the Armenian translation of *εὐσεβέστατος*, “most pious”; and *աստուածապսակեալ* is a direct translation of *θεοστεφής*, “God-crowned.”⁸⁴ Furthermore it is possible that *աստուածաւեր*, literally “God-loving,” should be equated with *θειότατος*, “most holy.”⁸⁵ Unfortunately the particular combination of epithets found in the Armenian inscriptions is not duplicated in a single regnal formula. However, both *Ածապազ/θεοφύλακτος* and *բարեպաշտ/εὐσεβής* (in its superlative form *εὐσεβέστατος*) comprise two of the standard epithets found in those formulae used in Byzantine Egypt after 630. One final preliminary observation should be made. K. A. Worp calculated that “the number of post-630 documents from Egypt dated after Heraclius only and that of post-630 documents from Egypt dated after Heraclius and Heraclius Jr. is almost even.”⁸⁶ Therefore, the dearth of any reference to Heraclius’s son in the Armenian inscriptions or literary sources should not be construed as a matter for concern.

The other epithets found in the historical texts do not appear in the surviving regnal formulae. There is, however, a second potential vehicle for the transfer of such epithets to Armenia, namely, the lengthy protocols found in the headings to imperial legislation and correspondence.⁸⁷ Such protocols listed all the titles claimed by the emperor. The first novella of Heraclius includes the terms *εὐσεβής*, *εὐτυχής*, and *νικητής*; the Armenian equivalents for these words are respectively *բարեպաշտ*, “pious,” *երջանիկ*, “fortunate,” and *յաղթող*, “victor.”⁸⁸ Significantly two of these Armenian equivalents appear in the long list of epithets applied to Heraclius in the draft Defense document, whereas the third, *բարեպաշտ*, has undergone a minor change to *աստուածապաշտ*. Although no such protocols from the reign of Heraclius survive in Armenian, we know from elsewhere in the History attributed to Sebeos that a letter of congratulation was sent from the *kat’ōikos* to Heraclius, when the latter was in Jerusalem to oversee the return of the True Cross on 21 March

⁸³ R. S. Bagnall and K. A. Worp, “Regnal Formulas in Byzantine Egypt,” *BASP* suppl. 2 (1979): 68–73; eadem, *Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt*, 2d ed. (Leiden, 2004), 95–98, 267–71; K. A. Worp, “Regnal Formulas of the Emperor Heraclius,” *Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 23 (1993): 217–32.

⁸⁴ For the exact Greek equivalents, see *Nor Baigirk’ Haykazean Lezui*, ed. G. Awetik’ean, X. Siwrmēlean, and M. Awgorean, 2 vols. (Venice, 1836, 1837; repr. Erevan, 1979, 1981). For the presence of *աստուածապազ/θεοφύλακτος*, “protected by God,” in Egyptian papyri, see Worp, “Regnal Formulas,” 227 (b); 228 (d); 230 (g); and 231 (j); *բարեպաշտ/εὐσεβέστατος*, “pious”; *ibid.*, 218 (1) and (2); 219 (3); 220 (4); 223 (12); 226 (a); 228 (c), (d), and (e); 229 (f) and (g); 230 (h) and (i); and *աստուածապսակեալ/θεοστεφής*, “God-crowned”: *ibid.*, 221 (7) and (8); 222 (9); 223 (12) and (13); 226 (a); 228 (c); 229 (f); 230 (h) and (i); and 231 (j). It is intriguing to note that *Ածապազ/θεοφύλακτος*, “protected by God,” is consistently applied to the sons of Heraclius rather than Heraclius himself and that all the papyri containing this epithet postdate 630. For evidence that this epithet was also applied to Heraclius, see the Smyrna inscriptions, note 93 below.

⁸⁵ Worp, “Regnal Formulas,” 218 (1); 221 (7); 222 (9); 223 (12) and (13); 228 (d); 229 (f) and (g); 231 (j).

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 225.

⁸⁷ J. Konidaris, “Die Novellen des Kaisers Herakleios,” *FM* 5, *Forschungen zur byzantinischen Rechtsgeschichte* 8, ed. D. Simon (Frankfurt am Main, 1982), 33–106.

⁸⁸ Konidaris, “Die Novellen,” 62. This novel is usually dated 1 May 612 because it specifies the Kalends of May, indiction 15: *ibid.*, 54 and 72.

630.⁸⁹ Moreover, irrespective of whether or not it was ever sent, the draft Defense document attests written communication between Constantinople and Armenia in the early years of the reign of Constans II. These Armenian inscriptions reveal that there was a pattern of correspondence between the Byzantine Empire and Armenia during this decade, although it is not possible to identify the parties involved or the nature of that correspondence.

The Armenian inscriptions at Ałaman (A.4), Bagavan (A.5), and Mren (A.7) therefore depend upon regnal formulae of Heraclius, both for chronological precision and for the laudatory epithets applied to the emperor. The epithets do not of themselves reflect contemporary Armenian perceptions of Heraclius, being integral to the formula from which the regnal year was taken. However, the translation and inclusion of such epithets in the text of an inscription implies tacit acceptance of them, revealing that Heraclius enjoyed a high reputation in Armenia after 630, as one might have anticipated after his startling victory over Xosrov II and the dramatic reconfiguring of the balance of power within Armenia which followed. Indeed, he is described in the Defense document as *φρληνιβήνωτηρδ*, in Greek *σωτηριώδης*, a Christlike quality that finds expression in the projection of Heraclius as the redeemer of the True Cross in the exterior relief at Mren.⁹⁰

The link between regnal formulae of Heraclius and epigraphy is not confined to these Armenian inscriptions. In 1740 Kemplen copied a fragmentary epitaph from a sarcophagus in Constantinople, now lost, whose last line Feissel has reconstructed as follows: Ἡρακλείου τοῦ εὐσεβ(εστάτου) ἔτους κ' (καὶ) τοῦ αὐτ[οῦ υἱοῦ] ἔτ[ους ιη'].⁹¹ Whether or not one accepts his reconstruction, the conjunction of εὐσεβεστάτου and of regnal years is extremely interesting, given the similar conjunction in Novella 4 and in the inscription at Ałaman, albeit in Armenian.⁹² Two Greek inscriptions from Smyrna supply further insight.⁹³ The first reads:

Κων<σ>ταντίνων τῶν νέων Ἡρακλήου
καὶ Ἡρακλήου τῶν εὐσεβεστάτων
καὶ θεοφυλάκτων ἡμῶν δεσπ(οτῶν)

The second is fragmentary:

[τῶν νέων Κωνστ]αντίνων Ἡρα[κλείου καὶ Ἡρα-]
[κλείου τῶν θ]εοφυλάκτων ἡ[μῶν δεσποτῶν]
[—] πολλὰ τὰ ἔ[τη]

The epithet “protected by God,” common to both inscriptions, is also found in the Bagavan inscription (A.5). Therefore, the two epithets used in the first inscription at Smyrna

⁸⁹ Sebeos, 118.8–17; Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos*, 2:210.

⁹⁰ Sebeos, 152.7.

⁹¹ Feissel, “La réforme chronologique de 537,” 186–87. “Year 20 of the most pious Heraclius and year 18 of his son.” Heraclius was enthroned on 5 October 610; his twentieth year therefore ran from 5 October 629 until 4 October 630. His son Heraclius Constantine was crowned co-emperor on 22 January 613; his eighteenth year began on 22 January 630.

⁹² Konidaris, “Die Novellen,” 94.

⁹³ *Die Inschriften von Smyrna Teil II, I*, ed. G. Petzl, *Inschriften Griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien* 24.1 (Bonn, 1987), nos. 851 and 851A. These are translated: “Of Heraclius and Heraclius the new Constantines our most pious and God-protected emperors,” and “Of Heraclius and Heraclius the new Constantines our God-protected emperors, many years.”

occur in the Armenian inscriptions at Ałaman (A.4) and Bagavan (A.5). This striking coincidence may be explained by adopting the same interpretation in respect of the Smyrna inscriptions, namely, that these too reflect the content and style of imperial regnal formulae. In other words, inscriptions both inside the Byzantine Empire and in Armenia depended upon contemporary imperial regnal formulae for chronological precision. In the course of exploiting these formulae, the laudatory epithets applied to the emperor were also transferred, both in Greek and in Armenian translation.

In contrast to the several inscriptions associated with the 630s, only one Armenian inscription can be linked to the following decade. The first Mastara inscription (A.10.1) states that the church was built in the years of T'ëodoros, bishop of Gnumik'. One Lord T'ëodoros bishop of Gnumik' is recorded attending the Council of Dvin, convened "at the command of the blessed kat'otikos of Armenia Nersēs *Šinot* and other bishops" in the "fourth year of Emperor Costandianos, pious [*barepašt*] king of the Romans."⁹⁴ These canons confirm that this see was occupied by a bishop T'ëodoros in the mid-640s, and the church has been dated on the strength of this evidence. This inscription is unique because it represents the only known instance of the tenure of the local bishop being used as the solitary dating mechanism. Tenure of local episcopal office is, however, one of the constituents in the synchronisms used at Bagaran (A.3), Ałaman (A.4), and Mren (A.7)—and in the synchronism found in book 2, chapter 50 of the *History of Ałuanik'*.⁹⁵ This chapter gives additional insight into this dating mechanism. Its self-proclaimed author, one Yovsēp, displays a precise knowledge of the length in office of two bishops of Arc'ax—Mihr and his successor, Andrēas.⁹⁶ This implies the existence of records listing successive bishops and the duration of their tenure, from which a local dating mechanism could be devised. Although such local records might appear conjectural, one such list has been preserved in a colophon, dated 155 of the Armenian era (706), of MS Jerusalem 849.⁹⁷ The colophon contains a list of the successive bishops of Aršarunik' from Kndak down to Grigoris, supplying the tenure of each in years:

⁹⁴ *Kanonagirk' Hayoc'*, ed. V. Hakobyan, 2 vols. (Erevan, 1964, 1971), 2:200. This preamble confirms the continuing influence of Byzantine regnal formulae upon contemporary Armenian chronological practice. It defines the year exclusively by reference to the reign of Constans II and qualifies his royal title with the familiar epithet "pious." Although the History attributed to Sebeos contains seven dates calculated by reference to the regnal years of Constans II, none of these affords him an epithet, laudatory or otherwise: see Sebeos, 141.10, 142.16, 146.11, 163.29, 164.12, 169.18, and 170.19. A colophon appended to a mathematical text records that "I Anania Širakac'i from the village of Anenic" began the undertaking "when God the Word had filled 668 years from the Virgin's womb, and in the eleventh rotation, in the 19th year of Constans": Mat'evosyan, *Hišatakaranner*, no. 24. In this instance a synchronism has been attempted using the birth of Christ, an indication date, and an imperial regnal year. Although the figures do not correspond to a single year, the combination of these Byzantine chronological mechanisms is significant, indicating that Byzantine practice continued to be employed in Armenia into the 660s. The Aruč inscription (A.11) supports this proposition.

⁹⁵ At Bagaran (A.3), the identity of the bishop and his see are unknown; at Ałaman (A.4) and Mren (A.7), the bishop is named as T'eo(v)p'ilos, bishop of Ašarunik'. Intriguingly the Canons of Dvin (September 644/645) identify one Grigor as bishop of Aršarunik' and one T'ëop'ilos as the bishop of Ašmunik': see Hakobyan, *Kanonagirk'*, 2:214. It is possible that the two have been confused. See above, note 78, for a full translation of the synchronism in *Patmut'wn Ałuanic'*.

⁹⁶ *Patmut'wn Ałuanic'*, 280.16–19; Dowsett, *Caucasian Albanians*, 181. Mihr: twelve years; Andrēas: eleven years.

⁹⁷ G. Yovsēp'yan, *Yišatakarank' jeragrac' (5 daric' minčew 12 dar)* (Ant'īlias, 1951), no. 17. According to this list, T'ëop'ilos was succeeded by Movsēs, not Grigor.

Bagrewand and Aršarunik' were established by Saint Grigor as the diocese of one bishop until the death of the Father of poets [*k'ert'otahayr*], the blessed bishop Movsēs. Therefore, having separated Aršarunk' and the house of Kamsarakan, the bishop was first:

Kndak, 46 years; Yohan, 11; T'atul, 9; T'ovma, 40; Havukn, 16; T'ovma, 11; Movsēs, 10; Yoys, 1; T'ēop'ilos, 26; Movsēs, 12; Łazar, 27; Grigoris, 33.

Until 155 of the Era of this volume, it was this [year] in which Gagik Kams[a]rakan consecrated the church of Vardanakert and news arrived that Šušan Kams[a]rakan the daughter of Vahan *patrikios* had inherited the name of faith confessor for the sake of Christ God, having been tortured in Xaṛan of Mesopotamia. Grigoris still another 7 years.

In this context, it is also worth recalling that a list of Armenian *kat'otikoi* was exploited in the compilation of the History attributed to Sebeos, and similar lists have also been discerned within, or appended to, the *Narratio de Rebus Armeniae*, the *History of Aṭuank'* (a list of *kat'otikoi* of Aṭuank' rather than Armenia), and the History of Yovhannēs Draxanakert'ci.⁹⁸ There seems to be little doubt that such records were maintained, at both a local and a metropolitan level. The inscription at Mastara (A.10.1) corroborates this practice and illustrates how such records could be used for the purposes of dating local monuments.

Only one inscription is dated by reference to the reign of Constans II, namely, the famous panel inscription at Aruč (A.11). The opening line specifies the 29th year of Constans. Unlike the earlier inscriptions, the year is represented in numerals rather than words, but this new practice does not seem to be significant when considered in the light of evidence from contemporary texts. The History attributed to Sebeos contains five dates expressed using numerals.⁹⁹ Instead, it is the figure itself that has prompted considerable disquiet. The traditional chronology of Byzantine emperors maintains that Constans II was murdered in his twenty-seventh year.¹⁰⁰ This evident discrepancy led both Orbeli and Strzygowski to query the authenticity of the inscription.¹⁰¹

How is this to be explained? In the first place, this inscription is not the only Armenian source to accord Constans II a longer reign than is generally accepted. The *History of Aṭuank'* states that Constans II was assassinated in his thirtieth year.¹⁰² Setting to one side for the moment the accuracy or otherwise of these dates, they imply that the annual cycle in both Armenia and Aṭuank' continued to be calculated by reference to the regnal years of Constans II throughout the 660s, long after the emperor's ambitious plans for an ex-

⁹⁸ Greenwood, "Sebeos," 360–63; G. Garitte, *La Narratio de Rebus Armeniae*, CSCO 132, Subs. 4 (Louvain, 1952), 401–45; *Patmut'iwñ Aṭuanić*, 341.21–347.4 and Dowsett, *Caucasian Albanians*, 227–31; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs Draxanakert'ci*, 43. A separate list of *kat'otikoi*, attributed to Yovhannēs Draxanakert'ci and composed in 897, was published as an appendix to the History of Samuel of Ani: *Samuēli k'ahanayi Anec'woy Hawak'munk'i groc'patmagrac*, ed. A. Tēr-Mik'ēlean (Vaṭaršapat, 1893), 269–77.

⁹⁹ Sebeos, 104.6, 112.29, 115.28, 121.5, and 123.15. All refer to regnal years of Xosrov II; thus none of the regnal years of Constans II employ this abbreviation.

¹⁰⁰ Theophanes places this event in A.M. 6160 (A.D. 667/668) and equates it with the twenty-seventh year of Constans II: Theophanes the Confessor, *Chronographia*, ed. C. de Boor, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1883–85), 1:351.14–352.9; trans. and commentary by C. Mango and R. Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor: Byzantine and Near Eastern History A.D. 284–813* (Oxford, 1997), 490–91. Nikephoros reports the length of the reign of Constans II as twenty-seven years: *Nikephoros, Patriarch of Constantinople. Short History*, ed. and trans. C. Mango, DOT 10 (Washington, D.C., 1990), para. 33.

¹⁰¹ Orbeli, *Izbrannye trudy*, 401–4; Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 1:46–49.

¹⁰² *Patmut'iwñ Aṭuanić*, 196.19: "in the thirtieth year of the kingship of Constans, eunuchs had undertaken to murder him."

tended network of Armenian, Albanian, and Persian clients across the Caucasus to the Caspian and beyond had been thwarted by Mu'āwiya and Constans II had turned his attention instead to the strategic potential of Greece, Italy, and Sicily. The significance of this continuity is harder to determine. The use of a Byzantine chronology may reflect the impact Constans II had had upon Armenia and Aḡuank' in the 650s, ongoing contact by imperial authorities during the 660s, the dearth of an alternative, accessible chronology, or a combination of any of these. From a Byzantine perspective, however, the single issue is their challenge to the traditional date for the murder of Constans II. In this respect they are supported by a source compiled in Italy. The *Liber Pontificalis* stipulates that Constans II was murdered in his bath "on the fifteenth day of July in the 12th indiction."¹⁰³ This establishes the year 669. Therefore, a source composed in Rome accords Constans II a reign of twenty-seven years and ten months; another way of presenting this information is to say that Constans came within two months of entering his twenty-ninth year. Given the proximity between the place of composition of the *Liber Pontificalis*, Rome, and the site of the emperor's murder, Sicily, it is strange that this evidence has not been preferred to the date supplied by Theophanes, whose chronological imperfections are well known.¹⁰⁴ When these fragments of evidence from both the eastern and western peripheries of the Byzantine world are combined, they support the proposition that Constans II was murdered on 15 July 669, at the very end of his twenty-eighth year. In any event, even if one rejects this attempt to redate the assassination of Constans II, this is not a sufficient reason to doubt the authenticity of the inscription at Aruč. In the light of the confused imperial succession after the murder of Constans in distant Sicily, and the apparent lack of another annual mechanism in Armenia, the continued use of the regnal years of Constans II appears eminently sensible. The parallel with the retention of Yazkert III on coins minted long after his death has already been made.

The Aruč inscription (A.11) is the latest Armenian inscription of the seventh century to refer to a Byzantine emperor. There is then a gulf of some three hundred and fifty years before an emperor, Michael IV, is mentioned again in an inscription.¹⁰⁵ This reference needs to be distinguished from the other examples because it does not occur in the context of a dating mechanism. The Aruč inscription, however, is not quite the end of the trail. The Georgian band inscription located on the exterior of the church of Sion at Samšvildē

¹⁰³ L. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis: Texte, introduction et commentaire*, 2d ed. with amendments by C. Vogel, 3 vols. (Paris, 1955–57), 1:344 and n. 7: "Et postmodum, XV die mensis iulii per XII indictionem praedictus imperator in balneo occisus est"; trans. R. Davis, *The Book of Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis)*, Translated Texts for Historians 5 (Liverpool, 1989), 72. Davis argues that from the time of Honorius (27 October 625–12 October 638), "there is no real doubt that we are dealing with a series of contemporary additions." P. Grierson, "The Tombs and Obits of the Byzantine Emperors (337–1042)," *DOP* 16 (1962): 49, states unequivocally: "The date of Constans' murder in Syracuse can be fixed as 15 July 668. The date is given by no known Greek source, but the *Vita Vitaliani* in the *Liber Pontificalis* dates it 15 July of the second (sic) indiction, i.e. 669, and though the last is evidently a slip—it must have been the first (sic) indiction—the author is so well-informed about Constans' doings in the west that 15 July can hardly be an error." It seems strange to accept the day of the month stipulated in this text yet reject the indiction date out of hand.

¹⁰⁴ Mango and Scott, *Theophanes*, lxvi–lxvii: "The historian would be well advised to subject all of Theophanes' dates to careful scrutiny."

¹⁰⁵ *DHV* 1: no. 129 and pl. xv. The inscription begins: "In 484 of this era I Abḡarip *marzpan* took a message from Smpat *Šahanšah* to the emperor of the Greeks Mixēl in Constantinople . . ." This equates to the year 13 March 1035–11 March 1036.

(Šamšwlde) attests the use of this means of dating in the third quarter of the eighth century.¹⁰⁶ It records that construction of the church began in year 20 of the reign of Constantine and was completed in year 3 of King Leo. The twentieth year of Constantine V ran from 18 July 760, and the third year of Leo IV began on 14 September 777. The use of this chronological mechanism implies a pattern of contact and communication between the Byzantine Empire and successive *eristavis*, Varazbakur and Iovane, who were related in some way to the *pitiaxš* of Gogarene.¹⁰⁷ This discourse is not otherwise attested. The inscription indicates that as late as the third quarter of the eighth century, Byzantium maintained contact with princely families whose territorial possessions lay far beyond imperial borders. It is tempting to envisage a similar engagement with Armenian princely families at this time, but this must remain conjectural.¹⁰⁸

The Aruč inscription is also the last dated Armenian inscription before the late eighth-century inscription of Uxtaytur at T^ʿalin (A.14). This employs an entirely new mechanism, namely, the Armenian era. It states that it was carved in the year 232 (15 May 783/13 May 784) and thus constitutes the earliest extant inscription to use this chronology. This has great importance for the study of the Armenian era system because it supplies a secure *terminus ante quem*. As noted previously, the earliest original manuscript to contain an Armenian era date is the famous Gospel of Queen Mlk^ʿē.¹⁰⁹ The first use of the Armenian era by an Armenian historian occurs in the History of Lewond.¹¹⁰ This text contains a single Armenian era date, 234 (14 May 785/13 May 786), provided one accepts the correction supplied by the History of Step^ʿanos Taronec^ʿi.¹¹¹ However, the date of composition of Lewond's History remains contentious; if a late ninth-century date is preferred, the significance of this Armenian era date is diminished.¹¹² The earliest Armenian era date in the

¹⁰⁶ I am very grateful to Professor R. W. Thomson for supplying the following translation, based on the reconstruction proposed by L. Muskhelishvili and reproduced by N. Chubinashvili; see note 32 above. The addition material in square brackets was proposed by Muskhelishvili, but the inscription seems to run on satisfactorily without this insertion. "O Christ, all-holy born of God, have mercy on the builders of this holy church, Varazbakur, Iovane and . . . by origin *pitiaxšs*. In the year 20 of the reign of Constantine the foundation was laid by the hand of the *mamp^ʿālī* and *eristavi* Varazbakur. And the building was not yet ready (when) Varazbakur fell asleep and his last brother, the *eristavi* Iovane, was zealous. Iovane completed . . . the final construction of this holy church and its *stoas*. And in the year 3 of king Leon, on the day of dedication/*enkenia*, the consecration took place for six days with a great crowd." Both *stoa* and *enkenia* are Greek words in Georgian script; their presence strengthens the proposed Byzantine connection.

¹⁰⁷ C. Toumanoff, *Studies in Christian Caucasian History* (Washington, D.C., 1963), 185–192, 260–64, and 399–408. Both the sequence and chronology of the *pitiaxšs* of Gogarene remain contentious. Neither Varazbakur nor Iovane register in these studies.

¹⁰⁸ The History of Lewond supplies a vivid account of the uprisings in Armenia in the early 770s and their suppression: Lewond 135.6–154.17; Arzoumanian, *History of Lewond*, 127–40. These are traditionally presented as a local Armenian reaction to excessive taxation. If one accepts the contention that there was contemporary correspondence between the Byzantine emperor and both Iberian and Armenian princes, there is an argument that the uprising was inspired, or at the very least encouraged, by the empire.

¹⁰⁹ See above, note 1.

¹¹⁰ Lewond, 165.23–25; Arzoumanian, *History of Lewond*, 147 and n. 7.

¹¹¹ The date given in the text is 233 (14 May 784/13 May 785). This date is then synchronized with the brief caliphate of Mūsā al-Hādī (4 August 785–14 or 15 September 786), which in fact corresponds to the years 234 and 235. However, Step^ʿanos Taronec^ʿi extracted material from the History of Lewond, including this passage, and his History records the year as 234: Step^ʿanos Taronec^ʿi, *Step^ʿanos Taronec^ʿwoy Patmut^ʿiwn Tiezerakan*, ed. S. Malxazeanc^ʿ (St. Petersburg, 1885), 133.23. The letters Գ and Գ are easily confused.

¹¹² The contention that the History of Lewond reflects a late 9th-century perspective will be advanced in a

History of T'ovma Arcruni is 300 (28 April 851/26 April 852).¹¹³ As noted previously, Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i's History is extremely sparing in its use of dates; its earliest Armenian era date is 302 (27 April 853/26 April 854).¹¹⁴ Although book 3 of the *History of Atuank'* dates events from the seventh century by reference to the Armenian era, it is clear that the underlying chronicle source from which these passages were taken was compiled long after these events.¹¹⁵ Evidently the author of this chronicle, active at the start of the tenth century, had resolved to calibrate events by reference to the Armenian era, even if this resulted in serious chronological error. Thus Uxtaytur's inscription has a particular importance, confirming that the Armenian era was in use by 783/784, seventy years before the earliest reliable reference in an Armenian historical text.

In relation to this chronological mechanism, there is one other category of material to consider. Several Armenian colophons contain early Armenian era dates. The earliest is that attached to the original Armenian translation of Socrates' *Ecclesiastical History* (SI):

In the six thousand two hundred and fourth year of the transitory existence [6204 – 5508 = 696], as the chronography of Saint Sop'i has, the senior church of the universal mother-city Constantinople, and the seven hundred and fourth of the coming of Christ [704 – 9 = 695] and in one hundred and forty-four of the era [551 + 144 = 695/5 June 696], in the ninth indiction [1 Sept. 695/31 August 696], in the first year of the reign of the second Leo, the autocrator Augustos [695/696], P'ilon T/Širakac'i translated through an original undertaking these books, a special abridgement from the Ecclesiastical History of Sokrates, having omitted the personal remarks and letters of others and discourses because of a shortage of paper and parchment that existed in foreign parts.

O Lord Nersēh *apohypaton patrikios*, you who are a builder of churches, may you always have peace from Christ, who is the giver of peace, may you constantly have the zeal of pious kings to sustain the labors of piety in yourself, and never having occasion may you wander from the paths of righteousness. And may you not be drawn and led astray by opponents who will fall into ruin, but contemplating what is above, may you evade assassins [ի սբաղանց/ի սպանողաց] and pursue righteousness, faith, love, striving after eternal life, like the pious king T'ēodos. And may you prosper in everything that you do and temptation be defeated through prayer which you have heard from this History and which we have seen. For the peace of Christ shall dwell in you abundantly and in your churches and country. Because you desired the translation of this History, with the same you shall walk the path of kings, through the grace and benevolence of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father Almighty and the Holy Spirit, glory, power, and honor, now and always and for ever and ever, Amen, Amen.¹¹⁶

forthcoming article. Central to the argument is a prophetic statement in the text: "Behold the time of your salvation has come, for now the scepter of kingship shall return very soon to the house of T'orgom . . ." (Łewond, 141.18–21). This prophecy is most easily interpreted not as the prediction of a contemporary 8th-century author but rather as the confident expression of one who had witnessed the reality of a revived kingdom of Armenia through the coronation of Ašot I Bagratuni on 26 August 884.

¹¹³ Thomas Arcruni, *Patmut'wn Tann Arcruneac'*, ed. K'. Patkanean (St. Petersburg, 1887; repr. Tiflis, 1917), facsimile reproduction, with new introduction by R. W. Thomson (Delmar, N.Y., 1991), 106.16–17; trans. and commentary by R. W. Thomson, *Thomas Artsruni: History of the House of the Artsrunik'* (Detroit, 1985), 173.

¹¹⁴ Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i, 124.27–125.1; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i*, 25.69.

¹¹⁵ *Patmut'wn Atuanic'*, 316.16–338.12; Dowsett, *Caucasian Albanians*, 206–24. The most serious, and intriguing, error is the transposition of the Arab conquests from the reign of Heraclius to that of his son Constantine, who is accorded a reign of three years rather than 120 days.

¹¹⁶ Mat'evosyan, *Hišatakaraner*, no. 28.

As R. W. Thomson has noted, there are problems in accepting the authenticity of this colophon.¹¹⁷ Although it is attached to SI, it describes the shorter, later adaptation of this work (SII). SII is a reworking of SI and not a fresh translation from a Greek original. Even the reference to paper, *k'artēz*, is problematic because this did not circulate in the Near East until the middle of the eighth century. Furthermore, there are four separate, authentic colophons which record the translation of Greek patristic texts into Armenian in Constantinople between 713 and 717.¹¹⁸ Dawit', *hypatos* and *kinar* of the royal table, and Step'annos, priest and *k'ert'ot*, were responsible for these translations. Although these four colophons contain synchronisms devised in much the same way as that employed by P'ilon, none of them uses an Armenian era date. It is worth remembering, however, that the five elements of P'ilon's synchronism, including the Armenian era date, correlate very neatly with one another.¹¹⁹ There seems little doubt that the synchronism evinces a Constantinopolitan origin. It refers to the church of St. Sophia and stipulates both an imperial regnal year and an indiction date. Nor does this colophon constitute the only contemporary evidence for St. Sophia as a repository of chronological knowledge. It has been suggested that the *Chronicon Paschale*, compiled in the third decade of the seventh century, was composed by a member of the clergy of St. Sophia under the patronage of Patriarch Sergius.¹²⁰ Although Thomson has rightly doubted the association between the colophon and SII, the synchronism, including the Armenian era date within it, may be genuine.

Four separate, unrelated colophons from the first half of the eighth century employ the Armenian era system as their exclusive chronological mechanism. The list of the bishops of Aršarunik' quoted above is dated 155 of the era (3 June 706/2 June 707).¹²¹ A history of the Holy Lance and other Mysteries of Christ was copied and translated "from Roman writing" into Armenian in Era 176 (29 May 727/27 May 728).¹²² The colophon attached to Artavazd Abraham's account of the martyrdom of Vahan Goł'n notes that Armenia began to drink the cup of punishment in "one hundred and fifty-two of the Armenian era" (4 June 703/2 June 704) and stayed "in captivity until one hundred and eighty-six of the era (26 May 737/25 May 738), in which the martyrdom of Vahan occurred."¹²³ Finally, a famous collection of homilies was assembled and organized into an annual cycle by Solomon, leader of the community of Mak'enoc', in Era 196 (24 May 747/

¹¹⁷ R. W. Thomson, *The Armenian Adaptation of the Ecclesiastical History of Socrates Scholasticus*, Hebrew University Armenian Studies 3 (Leuven, 2001), 9–13.

¹¹⁸ Mat'evosyan, *Hišatakaranner*, nos. 31–34; see also Yovsēp'yan, *Yišatakarank' je'agrac'*, nos. 18–20 for three of the four. These are attached to translations of books attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite, commentaries of Cyril of Alexandria, a commentary on Leviticus, and a miscellany of works by Gregory of Nyssa. The patristic focus of this translation initiative in Constantinople is significant because it supports the statement, repeated in each colophon, that the same two individuals were responsible for all four works.

¹¹⁹ Although the Christian era date is wrong by nine years, P. Peeters maintained that "L'année 704 de l'Incarnation est ici comptée selon la pratique des chronologistes arméniens, qui partent de l'an —9. Correction faite, nous retombons sur l'année 695." See P. Peeters, "À propos de la version arménienne de l'historien Socrate," in *Recherches d'histoire et de philologie orientales*, 1, SubsHag 27 (Brussels, 1951), XIX, 314.

¹²⁰ M. and M. Whitby, *Chronicon Paschale 284–628 AD*, Translated Texts for Historians 7 (Liverpool, 1989), xxii–xxviii.

¹²¹ Yovsēp'yan, *Yišatakarank' je'agrac'*, no. 17.

¹²² Mat'evosyan, *Hišatakaranner*, no. 36.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, no. 38. For further discussion of this colophon, see below, and note 223.

22 May 748).¹²⁴ Collectively these colophons attest the regular use of the Armenian era in the first half of the eighth century. Of course, the dearth of evidence precludes any judgment as to how widely this chronological system was used within Armenia; was it restricted to monastic communities or to certain regions or to particular documents? Nevertheless, a study of the literary and epigraphic sources suggests that the Armenian era was devised at some point after the death of Constans II and that it was in use in the first quarter of the eighth century.¹²⁵

This corpus presents one final chronological challenge. The inscriptions at Bagaran (A.3), Bagavan (A.5), Mastara (A.10.4), and Aruč (A.11) all specify the month and day of the month on which the construction of the church was completed; the Bagavan inscription also gives the day on which construction began.¹²⁶ Moreover, the Šušannan mosaic inscription from Jerusalem concludes with the specific date *Horì 18* (B.2). Although the exact combination of elements varies within these five inscriptions, they all adopt the same distinctive sequence: year, month, day of the month, and then day of the week. In so doing, they corroborate the structure of the three specific dates found in the History attributed to Sebeos. At the same time, however, these three dates may be distinguished. Far from commemorating the foundation of a church, they each define the final capitulation of a besieged center: Jerusalem, Dvin, and Arcap'k'.¹²⁷

How are these two groups of specific dates to be interpreted? As proposed previously, it seems most likely that the day on which a church was completed was recorded in its foundation inscription because it set the date for the annual commemoration of the benefactors of that church. Not only did this have a practical advantage in that the date was preserved on the structure itself for as long as it stood; it also had an obvious Old Testament analogue. 1 Kings 6 specifies when Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem was started: "In the four hundred and eightieth year after the Israelites had come out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Ziv, the second month, he began to build the Temple of the Lord."¹²⁸ The chapter also identifies when the Temple was completed: "In the fourth year of Solomon's reign, the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid, in the month Ziv; and in the eleventh year, in the month of Bul, which is the eighth month, the house was finished."¹²⁹ Moreover, in recording Solomon's dedication of the Temple, 1 Kings 8 identifies the exact date on which this occurred.¹³⁰ Thus the chronological precision displayed in the account of the construction of the Temple is replicated in the

¹²⁴ Ibid., no. 39.

¹²⁵ Peeters argued that the Armenian era system was devised in the 670s; see Peeters, "La version arménienne de l'historien Socrate," 317–19.

¹²⁶ Bagaran (A.3): three years after the death of Lord But Ariuelean, month Trē, day twenty. Bagavan (A.5): twenty-first year of Heraclius, month Hrotic', day thirty for start of construction and twenty-ninth year of Heraclius, month Navasard, day twenty, a Friday, for completion. Mastara (A.10.4): Of the month Arac', [day] 14. Aruč (A.11): 29th year of Constans, month Mareri, day 15.

¹²⁷ Capture of Jerusalem (Sebeos, 115.28–29): "on the 19th day [of the siege of Jerusalem], in the month Margac', which was the 28th day of the month in the 25th year of the kingship of Apruēz Xosrov." Capture of Dvin (Sebeos, 138.20): "the 20th day of the month Trē, a Friday." Capture of Arcap'k' (Sebeos, 146.11–12: "in the second year of Constans, in the month Horì, on the 23rd day of the month, a Sunday at dawn."

¹²⁸ 1 Kings 6:1.

¹²⁹ 1 Kings 6:37–38.

¹³⁰ 1 Kings 8:2–3.

Armenian dedicatory inscriptions. In my view, this echo is deliberate. Although this proposition might at first sight appear unlikely, a passage from the *History of Atuank'* illustrates the influence of these chapters from 1 Kings.¹³¹ The passage comprises a prayer of dedication purportedly recited by Ĵuanšēr, prince of Atuank in the third quarter of the seventh century, on the occasion of the consecration of a church founded by him. Ĵuanšēr's prayer is examined in the following section, but for the present it is worth noting how closely it is modeled upon Solomon's dedication found in 1 Kings 8. This extends to recording the precise day on which the church was consecrated; we are told that Ĵuanšēr's church was consecrated on the eleventh day of Arac'.¹³²

The second group of specific dates should also be interpreted in terms of an Old Testament paradigm. 2 Kings 25 records the siege of Jerusalem by the forces of the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar, and its eventual capture.¹³³ It records that Nebuchadnezzar advanced with all his forces to the walls of Jerusalem in the "ninth year of the reign of King Zedekiah, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month," and that the city fell in the fourth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, on the ninth day. A similar precision informs the description of the fall of Jerusalem to the Persians included in the *History* attributed to Sebeos. It records that the city fell "in the month Margac', which was the 28th day of the month in the 25th year of the reign of Apruēz Xosrov." Although the two accounts differ in matters of detail, their scrupulous concern for chronological accuracy implies a relationship between the two. The accounts of the capture of Dvin and Arcap'k' by Arab raiders were similarly influenced, being refracted through the prism of the Old Testament description of that first fall of Jerusalem. These centers were both under the control of the people of God and were captured by enemy forces after a siege.

In summary, the literary and epigraphic sources confirm that a high degree of chronological precision was capable of being achieved in Armenia during the seventh century. They also reveal, however, that such precision was reserved for particular circumstances. Two such contexts have been defined, namely, the annual service of commemoration for the benefactors of a church and the fall of a besieged city or fortress. The former secured the date for the annual celebration of the church's foundation, and the latter mirrored the Old Testament account of the fall of Jerusalem.

DEDICATION AND PURPOSE

Fourteen of the eighteen Armenian inscriptions found in Armenia, together with one of the inscriptions in Greek, are associated in some way with the original foundation of a church. These dedicatory inscriptions tend to include two important details: the date of the foundation and the identity of the person or persons responsible for the foundation. A study of the second element reveals that these inscriptions can be divided into two groups: those recording the construction of a church at the instruction of a cleric and those attesting the initiative of a secular figure. The first group includes the foundations at Tekor (A.1), Hrip'simē (A.2.1–2), Bagavan (A.5), Mastara (A.10.1–4), and Zvart'noc' (A.18). Although the last lacks a full dedication in Armenian, we have already noted that the terse

¹³¹ *Patmut'wn Atuanic'*, 188.6–189.20; Dowsett, *Caucasian Albanians*, 121–22.

¹³² *Patmut'wn Atuanic'*, 187.21; Dowsett, *Caucasian Albanians*, 121.

¹³³ 2 Kings 25:1–4.

inscription in Greek and the Greek monograms carved onto several large capitals refer to the *kat'otikos* Nersēs III. Independent notices in the Histories attributed to Sebeos and Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i and the *History of Atuanik'* all credit Nersēs III with responsibility for the construction.¹³⁴ The second group of dedicatory inscriptions, attesting secular commissions, comprises those at Tekor (A.1), Bagaran (A.3), Ałaman (A.4), Mren (A.7), Naxčavan (A.8), Aruč (A.11), and T'alın (A.12). Tekor appears in both groups because the inscription is composite, reflecting two separate foundations; one part identifies Yohan *kat'otikos*, and the other names Sahak Kamsarakan.

Arguably, this division into lay and clerical highlights a further distinction. Those inscriptions naming secular lords as responsible tend to justify the foundation in terms of intercession for themselves and their immediate family. The benefit to the individual is stated explicitly. Thus the construction of a church was recognized as a means of gaining remission for sins and escaping divine punishment. Those linked exclusively to clerics tend to be more reticent when it comes to articulating the spiritual advantages for the founder. Thus the inscriptions at Hrip'simē (A.2.2) and Zvart'noc' (A.18) contain a brief invocation to Christ to “remember” the founder, and those at Tekor (A.1) and Bagavan (A.5) do not give any reason for the foundation, simply naming the individual concerned without further comment. There are, however, exceptions to both categories. Three of the inscriptions at Mastara refer explicitly to the anticipated redemption and expiation of the church's founder, the unworthy cleric Grigoros (A.10.1–3). This mirrors the inscriptions from secular foundations. At the same time, however, two of the inscriptions assert that the church has a role as “a refuge for Mazdara” (i.e., Mastara) (A.10.2–3), the second adding that, through the intercession of St. Yovhannēs, Mastara will prosper. These inscriptions attest an intriguing fusion of individual and collective benefit. Equally the church at Mren was built for the intercession of “the Kamsarakank' and Mren and all [?].” This asserts a much broader benefit, one that extended beyond the prince and his immediate family to his kin and, it seems, to the local community generally. The broad nature of this intercession is exceptional in the context of a secular foundation.

There is no obvious explanation for this apparent distinction between ecclesiastical and secular foundations. It is possible that regular intercession for a clerical founder was somehow implied through his involvement in the church's construction and thus did not need to be expressed in the same way, but this is conjectural. The key observation is that both Armenian clerics and princes founded churches at this time. A similar impression is obtained from the written sources. Although the History attributed to Sebeos records the construction of the church at Avan by the so-called anti-*kat'otikos* Yovhannēs and the building of the martyrion of Hrip'simē by the *kat'otikos* Komitas, it does not fail to acknowledge the central role played by Smbat Bagratuni in the rebuilding of the cathedral church of St. Grigor in Dvin.¹³⁵ Thus the categorization identified from the dedicatory inscriptions holds true for literary sources as well: both clerics and princes were responsible for church foundations.

Before advancing to consider those inscriptions that record something other than the original foundation of the church, let us return to the account of the construction,

¹³⁴ Sebeos, 147.21–31; *Patmut'iwn Atuanic'*, 236.9–10; Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i, 88.13–18; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i*, 19.47.

¹³⁵ Avan: Sebeos, 112.4–5; Hrip'simē: Sebeos, 121.5–28; St. Grigor at Dvin: Sebeos, 100.5–18.

decoration, and dedication of the “temple of the Lord” by Prince ǰuanšēr and test it against the evidence of the epigraphic record.¹³⁶ According to the narrative, ǰuanšēr stated that the church was built “as a refuge” for a fragment of “the living cross,” a reference to the piece of the True Cross granted to him previously by Constans II.¹³⁷ In depositing the fragment in the church that he had built, ǰuanšēr is imitating King Solomon, who constructed the Temple in Jerusalem as “the house of the Name of the Lord” and “a place for the ark, in which is the covenant of the Lord.”¹³⁸ As suggested above, the prayer of ǰuanšēr can only be interpreted through Solomon’s own prayer of dedication (1 Kings 8). ǰuanšēr refers explicitly to the Temple of Solomon, inviting the Lord to fill his church with his Holy Spirit in the form of a cloud in the same way that the glory of the Lord had filled Solomon’s Temple as a dark cloud.¹³⁹ ǰuanšēr calls on the Lord to hear the supplications of “those bordering on the sea in the east” worshiping in his church and to grant their prayers.¹⁴⁰ Solomon prays in exactly the same way: “Hear the supplication of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray towards this place.”¹⁴¹ There can be no doubt that the two prayers are directly related to each other.

Although the prayer of ǰuanšēr was inspired by that of Solomon, it departs from its biblical model in two important respects. In the first place, it is far more personal, articulating specific supplications for ǰuanšēr and his immediate family. By contrast, Solomon prayed that God would heed future requests from the people of Israel presented in the Temple or offered in the direction of the Temple when they were confronted by particular circumstances.¹⁴² Solomon does not intercede for himself or his family. Second, ǰuanšēr’s prayer has an eschatological perspective. ǰuanšēr asks for God’s mercy “at the coming of the universal day of resurrection, when the invisible shall take the place of the visible, and the trumpet blasts shall summon the dead from sleep and the fiery/angelic hosts from the ends of the earth shall gather beside you.”¹⁴³ It is in the context of the Last Days that ǰuanšēr intercedes for himself and “my spouse Xosrovanuš, and my forefathers, especially my gray-haired father Varaz-Grigor and my mother Goriduxt and my brothers Varaz Perož and Yezut Xosrov and my children.”¹⁴⁴ Whereas Solomon’s prayer envisages certain situations in the future, it does not contemplate the End of Time. The apocalyptic tone of ǰuanšēr’s prayer finds contemporary corroboration in the History attributed to Sebeos.¹⁴⁵

Although the passage expresses the past conduct and future expectations of a prince for himself and his family in much greater detail than is found in any inscription, there are several important correspondences between the literary and epigraphic evidence. As

¹³⁶ *Patmut’iwn Atuanic’*, 188.6–189.20; Dowsett, *Caucasian Albanians*, 121–22.

¹³⁷ *Patmut’iwn Atuanic’*, 182.4–5; Dowsett, *Caucasian Albanians*, 116–17.

¹³⁸ 1 Kings 8:21. I am grateful to L. MacCoull for pointing out that Solomon’s dedication prayer in 1 Kings 8 is read as a lection in most Eastern Christian liturgical rites for the dedication of a church.

¹³⁹ *Patmut’iwn Atuanic’*, 188.8–10: “send into this temple the grace of your holy spirit and after the manner of the temple of Solomon with the divine cloud of your glory like a fog, adorn and embellish this.” Compare 1 Kings 8:10–13.

¹⁴⁰ *Patmut’iwn Atuanic’*, 188.10–11. This phrase implies a contemporary perception that the people of Ał-uank’ had a sense of their own identity, defined in terms of both orientation and location.

¹⁴¹ 1 Kings 8:30.

¹⁴² 1 Kings 8:31–53.

¹⁴³ *Patmut’iwn Atuanic’*, 189.8–11; Dowsett, *Caucasian Albanians*, 122.

¹⁴⁴ *Patmut’iwn Atuanic’*, 189.12–15.

¹⁴⁵ Greenwood, “Sebeos,” 375–88.

noted above, the dedication of Ĵuanšĕr's church is accorded a precise date, the eleventh day of the month of Arac'.¹⁴⁶ Ĵuanšĕr prays for his own safety in this world in the same way that Annay sought divine protection for herself and her children in the conclusion to the Bagaran inscription (A.3). He also prays for God's mercy on the Day of Judgment for himself and his family. This matches the specific naming of close relatives found in the inscriptions of Bagaran (A.3), Ałaman (A.4), Aruč (A.11), and T'alin (A.12), in which the founder names those members of his immediate family deserving of God's mercy and seeks intercession on their behalf. Ĵuanšĕr's prayer concludes with an explicit statement as to why he had built the church: "Deliver me from eternal temptations and in return for this temple which I have built to your name on earth, prepare for this sinner a spiritual resting place in the house of your Father."¹⁴⁷ This stresses once again the personal benefit that was believed to accrue to the founder of a church. Indeed, the foundation is presented almost in contractual terms, whereby God will be required to grant Ĵuanšĕr heavenly citizenship in return for his earthly foundation. The precise coincidence of epigraphic and textual evidence shows that Ĵuanšĕr's prayer reflects the perceptions and sentiments of a contemporary. It follows that this prayer is of great importance when considering the motivation behind princely involvement in church foundations because it supplies additional information to that found in the inscriptions. Ĵuanšĕr prays for present protection and prosperity, mercy for his immediate family on Judgment Day, and membership of heaven for himself. There is no sense of ongoing benefit for future generations of Ĵuanšĕr's family. This is borne out in the epigraphic record and goes some way toward explaining why princely families were involved in multiple foundations. Aside from the prestige associated with such constructions, and the tradition that rival family members developed different centers, each prince had personal responsibility for his eternal fate and could not rely upon the achievements of his ancestors to secure heavenly citizenship on his behalf.

There is one further intriguing element within Ĵuanšĕr's prayer. It seems to imply that the church was open to public worship: "And if the whole country of Ałuank' should come together to glorify your name in this house through the power of this cross that accepted Christ, may you close the gates of the enemies and impede the marauders."¹⁴⁸ However, Solomon's prayer of dedication also contemplates the people of Israel praying and making supplication to the Lord in the Temple itself in times of defeat. In the light of this biblical parallel, the reference should not be treated as evidence for public participation in the services held in the church.

The prayer of Ĵuanšĕr is followed by a short passage in which he promised on oath that he and his sons would lay "the first-fruits before the Lord and receive his mercy" at that place.¹⁴⁹ This action implies a personal, continuing attachment to this particular foundation on the part of Ĵuanšĕr, one that is illustrated by his subsequent decoration of the church following his first visit to the King of the South, alias Mu'āwiya.¹⁵⁰ Frustratingly there are no parallel inscriptions recording subsequent endowments, either by the original founder or founders or their immediate successors.

¹⁴⁶ *Patmut'iwñ Ałuanic'*, 187.21; Dowsett, *Caucasian Albanians*, 121.

¹⁴⁷ *Patmut'iwñ Ałuanic'*, 189.18–20.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 188.13–15.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 189.22–190.1.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 192.8–196.10; Dowsett, *Caucasian Albanians*, 124–26.

Before considering the other inscriptions in the corpus, let us examine these Armenian inscriptions from a different angle, namely, the insight they shed upon the anticipated function of the individual church. The churches at Tekor (A.1), Hrip'simē (A.2.1), and Naxčavan (A.8) are *vkayarank'* or martyria, housing relics of St. Sargis, St. Hrip'simē and St. Step'anos/Stephen the first martyr, respectively. The passage from the *History of Atuanak'* examined above reveals that the church founded by Juanšēr was designed to receive a fragment of the True Cross. Moreover, the small martyrium described in the same history as being built by the hermit Yovsēp in the village of Yterk in Arc'ax eventually contained relics of St. Step'anos, St. Gēorg, St. Andrew, the Apostle Thomas, and John the Baptist.¹⁵¹ Thus it is clear that certain churches were perceived primarily in terms of their role as the repository of specified holy relics.

The other Armenian inscriptions do not comment directly upon the function of the church. It may be significant, however, that the inscription at Aruč (A.11) describes the building as *surb kat'otikēs*, "this holy cathedral." The proximity between this church and a secular palace thirty yards to the south has already been noted. Their juxtaposition implies that this church had an important role in court ceremonial, a proposition supported by its impressive size, the number of windows (to maximize the amount of light entering the building), and the choice of subject for the principal wall painting in the eastern apse. Christ is portrayed standing on a pedestal and holding a parchment with a verse from John's Gospel.¹⁵² The verse has an eschatological significance because it refers to a time when Christ will show himself to those who love him.¹⁵³ It is possible that the onlooker is also being invited to interpret the presentation of Christ as king and judge in the context of the temporal authority enjoyed by Grigor Mamikonean over Armenia as the principal client of Mu'āwiya. In other words, there is an intentional, albeit implicit, association between the subject of the wall painting and the temporal authority enjoyed by the sponsor of the church. Some churches, therefore, were conceived and functioned as palatine churches.

By contrast, none of the inscriptions refers specifically to the role of a foundation as mausoleum. The literary sources, however, contain valuable information about Armenian princely burial practices, revealing that family members were usually buried in the same place. The Iranian origin of this tradition was first identified and discussed by N. G. Garsoïan.¹⁵⁴ The History attributed to Sebeos records that Smbat Bagratuni and his son Varaztiroc' were both buried at Dariwnk'.¹⁵⁵ This tradition was still practiced at the end of the seventh century, when Lewond records that Ašot Patrik Bagratuni was also buried there.¹⁵⁶ By way of later comparison, the History of T'ovma Arcruni records that several generations of Arcruni princes were buried in the monastery of the Holy Cross in the

¹⁵¹ *Patmut'iwn Atuanic'*, 280.5–282.19; Dowsett, *Caucasian Albanians*, 181–83.

¹⁵² Der Nersessian, *L'art arménien*, 72 and figs. 47 and 48.

¹⁵³ John 14:21: "Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father and I too will love him and show myself to him."

¹⁵⁴ N. G. Garsoïan, "The Locus of the Death of Kings: Iranian Armenia—The Inverted Image," in *The Armenian Image in History and Literature*, ed. R. G. Hovannisian, Studies in Near Eastern Culture and Society 3 (Malibu, Calif., 1981), repr. in N. G. Garsoïan, *Armenia between Byzantium and the Sasanians* (London, 1985), no. XI, 43–44.

¹⁵⁵ Sebeos, 104.6–9 and 144.30–31.

¹⁵⁶ Lewond, 18.20–24; Arzoumanian, *History of Lewond*, 55.

province of Aḡbag, including the grandfather, father, mother, and elder brother of Gagik Arcruni who dominated Vaspurakan in the first half of the tenth century.¹⁵⁷ The earliest extant inscription to specify that the original foundation was used as a mausoleum dates from the early eleventh century. It reveals that the monastery of Marmašēn, founded in 1029 by Vahram prince of princes, *anthypatos patrikios*, and son of Grigor Pahlavuni, prince of Armenia, was “the place of our tomb.”¹⁵⁸ In 1040 Aplḡarip, *marzpan* of Armenia, built the church of Grigor Pahlavuni/Apuḡamrenc’ in Ani as a “sepulcher for my father Grigor and my brother Hamzē and my sister Seda.”¹⁵⁹ Clearly Armenian churches could fulfill a variety of functions, serving as martyria, as constituent elements within palatine complexes, and as sepulchers. However, although some foundation inscriptions mention the deposit of holy relics, they do not otherwise specify the purpose or purposes to which the church would be put.

For the most part, the remaining inscriptions comprise simple invocations for divine assistance or forgiveness (A.17 and A.18), commemorations (B.3 and B.4), epitaphs (A.13 and B.2), and graffiti (A.20).¹⁶⁰ Five inscriptions, however, require further comment. The Greek inscription at Ereroyk’ (A.16) is a quotation of Psalm 93:5: “Holiness befits your house, O Lord, for evermore.”¹⁶¹ None of the other inscriptions in Armenia cite the Bible directly; the closest is the allusion in the Mastara inscription (A.10.3) to Christ as the bridegroom of the church. This direct citation coupled with the evident preference for Greek rather than Armenian places this church securely within a broader Near Eastern tradition. Ten similar inscriptions quoting this verse have been found scattered across the Near East from Thrace to Syria, Palestine, and the Negev; seven are in mosaic, two are carved on stone, and one is painted.¹⁶² One of the two stone inscriptions, from an unknown site in Cilicia, occurs on the upper face of a fragmentary chancel plaque. The other was incised on a dovetail plate in relief and located in the lintel of the eastern doorway in the southern

¹⁵⁷ Ašot Arcruni, grandfather of Gagik: T’ouma Arcruni, 217.19–23. Derenik Arcruni, father of Gagik: 228.16–19. Sop’i, mother of Gagik: 229.7–9. Ašot Arcruni, elder brother of Gagik: 249.5–10. It is also worth noting that the same monastery had previously received the remains of two great-uncles of Gagik: Grigor Arcruni (199.31–200.2) and Gurgēn Arcruni (204.26–29).

¹⁵⁸ Aḡšan, *Širak*, 148.

¹⁵⁹ *DHV* 1: no. 97 and pl. xi. The word for sepulcher is Հանգստարան.

¹⁶⁰ The inscription associated with the famous bird mosaic (B.1) is also commemorative: “For the memory and salvation of all Armenians whose names the Lord knows.” The precise meaning of the phrase “all Armenians” is unclear. Although theoretically it could be interpreted to mean all Armenians anywhere in space or time, on the balance of probabilities, it seems more likely that it was intended to have a much narrower meaning, defining Armenians within that particular community in Jerusalem. This implies that the community was mixed, comprising both Armenians and non-Armenians.

¹⁶¹ This numbering follows that of the Septuagint and the Armenian version. From Ps. 10:22 to Ps. 147.11, one has to subtract one to find the corresponding Psalm in the Hebrew and King James versions.

¹⁶² For a complete bibliography, see *Inscriptions de Cilicie*, ed. G. Dagron and D. Feissel, *TM Monographies* 4 (Paris, 1987), no. 23. All of the inscriptions cited are in mosaic with the exception of that in Thrace at Medeia and that being recorded by Dagron and Feissel under this entry. One further example, also in mosaic, has recently come to light, from Horvat Be’er Shema’ (Birsame or Bersaman) in the southwest Negev: V. Tzaferis, “Ten Greek Inscriptions in Mosaic Pavements in the Ancient Christian Church of St. Stephen,” *Eretz-Israel* 25 (1996): 81*–82* and fig. 9. The earliest dated mosaic inscription is that from Ascalon (A.D. 493): K. J. H. Vriezen, “Inscriptions in Mosaic Pavements in Byzantine Palestina/Arabia Quoting Texts from the Old Testament,” in *The Use of Sacred Books in the Ancient World*, ed. L. V. Rutgers and P. W. van der Horst (Leuven, 1998), 251. The latest dated mosaic inscription of this series is that at Qabr Hiran (A.D. 575): E. Renan, *Mission de Phénicie* (Paris, 1864), 611.

wall of the North church at Deir Sem'ān (Telanissos), close to the pilgrimage complex at Qal'at Sem'ān in northern Syria.¹⁶³ In terms of its content, layout, and position, this inscription is close to that found at Ereroyk'. Although a direct connection between these churches is unlikely, this epigraphic correspondence, noted by Shelov-Kovediaev, is significant.¹⁶⁴ It corroborates the proposition that the basilica at Ereroyk' reflects Syrian traditions and practices in terms of church design and decoration.¹⁶⁵ It may also supply a very tentative *terminus post quem* for the construction of Ereroyk', because development at Qal'at Sem'ān, including the North church, began in earnest only after 476.

As noted previously, the content of the three Arabic inscriptions at Zvart'noc' (A.19) remains at issue. Several readings proposed by Xač'atryan have been rejected by R. Hoyland, including the alleged references to the "collections of rents" and the "*kharadj* of the village."¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, those elements securely identified by Hoyland afford several important insights. The third inscription comprises an Arabic name coupled with the standard *bismillāh*, inviting divine blessing upon the act; there can be no doubt that it was written by a Muslim Arab. Although the purpose behind the first inscription remains concealed in the first three lines of text, it contains an eighth-century *hijra* date, A.H. 154 (24 December 770/12 January 771) and correlates this with the governorship of Yazīd b. Jarad and another figure. Such a synchronism within an Arabic inscription is unprecedented. The second inscription consists of an invocation by Ilyās b. 'Īsā al-Waddāki, seeking divine pardon for himself, his whole family, his house, and his village. In addition to the possibility that his name may reflect a Christian Arab origin, the breadth of the intercession is also exceptional, extending to his whole family and even, it seems, to his village. As such, it bears an uncanny resemblance to intercessions expressed in Armenian inscriptions.

Two inscriptions attest a secondary, subsequent bequest to an existing church or religious community. The first, unearthed recently in the Musrara quarter in Jerusalem (B.6), records that one Ewstat' *erēc'*, elder, was responsible for a mosaic floor and requests intercession for him and his brother Łukas. The second records the provision of a water source to T'alín by Uxtaytur (A.14). It is the first Armenian inscription to include a protective curse, warning that anyone who destroys the donation will become liable for the sins of the donor. In the wider context of Near Eastern epigraphy, this feature is not exceptional—tomb robbers are repeatedly anathematized, and an inscription at Aphrodisias threatens those who throw earth against a wall with condemnation by the 318 Fathers of the Council of Nicaea—but it seems to represent a new development in Armenia, reflecting a contemporary concern on the part of Uxtaytur for the survival of his bequest and, by implication, contemporary insecurity.¹⁶⁷

This leaves only the mysterious inscription of Ezr at Avan (A.6). The History attributed to Sebeos records the circumstances surrounding the foundation of that church in the Greek sector of Armenia after 591 by the so-called anti-kat'otikos Yovhannēs, described as

¹⁶³ PPUAES IIIB: no. 1160; *IGLSyr* 2: no. 414.

¹⁶⁴ Shelov-Kovediaev, "Zametki," 63–65.

¹⁶⁵ Khatchatrian, *L'architecture arménienne*, 45–48; Š. Ter-Gevorgyan, *Hayastani ev Siriayi vatk'ristoneakan čartarapetut'yan aінč'ut'yunnerē* (Erevan, 2000), 242–50; Maranci, *Medieval Armenian Architecture*, 241–53.

¹⁶⁶ Xač'atryan, *Korpus*, no. 6.

¹⁶⁷ Dagron and Feissel, *Inscriptions de Cilicie*, no. 106.

“one who was united in communion” with the Greek church over the status of the Council of Chalcedon.¹⁶⁸ At this time, the cathedral church of St. Grigor in Dvin had not yet been rebuilt following its destruction in 572.¹⁶⁹ The vessels of that church had been taken into safekeeping in the city of Karin.¹⁷⁰ Thus neither the cathedral nor its vessels were available to Movsēs, the kat’olikos in the Persian sector. The construction of the church at Avan should therefore be interpreted as part of a concerted attempt by the Greek church to gain control over its Armenian counterpart. These ambitions had to be set aside when the forces of Xosrov II drove the Romans out of Armenia in a series of hard-fought campaigns after 603, but they were not forgotten. In the aftermath of victory, Heraclius entered into negotiations with the kat’olikos Ezr on the issue of church union. The History attributed to Sebeos maintains that Ezr was threatened with a similar division of the see between the Greek and Persian sectors unless he entered into communion with the Greek church.¹⁷¹ Although Ezr is castigated in later Armenian histories for accepting that union, the relevant passages in this History are not hostile to him, suggesting that the author of these passages, like Ezr himself, belonged to that party within the Armenian church which preferred the Greek theological position on Chalcedon. This is the context in which Ezr’s inscription at Avan needs to be interpreted. Arguably it is an assertion of his claim to possession of that church and the Christological tradition espoused by Yovhannēs. The combination of Greek and Armenian words is unique, as is the unexpected use of cryptograms. It is significant that Ezr’s successor as kat’olikos, Nersēs III, also employed Greek in his inscriptions at Zvart’noc’ and that he too was accused of pro-Greek sympathies. The choice of Greek was intentional, evoking association with and expressing sympathy for the Greek church. The *Narratio de Rebus Armeniae*, completed in the year 690, attests the same Armenian tradition. G. Garitte observed: “Visiblement, notre auteur n’a pas l’intention d’écrire pour des lecteurs non arméniens; nulle part il ne manifeste le moindre souci de se faire comprendre d’un public byzantin; en de nombreux passages, il aurait dû, si tel avait été son but, s’exprimer autrement ou fournir des renseignements qu’il ne pouvait supposer connus hors des frontières de l’Arménie.”¹⁷² Having proposed that the anonymous author was both Chalcedonian and Armenian, Garitte nevertheless envisaged that the original was composed in Armenian and translated into Greek, noting that “les fautes de traduction et les arménismes qui apparaissent dans son texte peuvent s’expliquer aussi bien chez un traducteur grec trop attaché à son modèle arménien que chez un Arménien peu sensible à certaines nuances de la langue grecque.”¹⁷³ He preferred the second hypothesis. However, the study of the inscriptions suggests a third possibility, that the text was composed very deliberately in Greek by an Armenian and that there was no intermediate, translation stage in the process of transmission.

¹⁶⁸ Sebeos, 91.11–24.

¹⁶⁹ For its destruction, see Sebeos, 68.5–12; for its rebuilding, at the instigation and insistence of Smbat Bagratuni, and against the wishes of the commander of the fortress (*berdakalin*) and the *marzpan*, see Sebeos, 100.5–18.

¹⁷⁰ Sebeos, 91.21–23.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 131.31–132.11.

¹⁷² Garitte, *Narratio*, 361.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 400.

HISTORICAL POTENTIAL

Since these inscriptions are original and manifestly have not been amended or altered, they constitute important historical sources. In the first place, they represent an invaluable record of contemporary social terminology. As such, they may be used as “controls” against which to test the terminology found in the historical sources which date from this period. This comparative exercise indicates that the latter have not been subjected to later interference or rewriting in the course of transmission—a particular concern in the light of the late manuscript tradition. At the same time, these inscriptions comprise independent free-standing historical sources in their own right and therefore provide key information about the structure and functioning of Armenian society, at least at an élite level, under Sasanian, Byzantine, and Islamic rule. Finally, they attest something of the impact upon Armenia of the dramatic political upheaval experienced in the Near East during the seventh century and the reactions of Armenians to those events.

When the range of Persian, Greek, and Armenian honors and titles preserved in the epigraphic record is compared with that found in the History attributed to Sebeos, the *History of Atuank'*, and other works, it is found to correspond closely. This coincidence supports the contention that these historical compilations preserve contemporary materials in an unaltered state and therefore reflect seventh-century conditions and perceptions. Thus the inscription at Bagaran (A.3) asserts that the church was completed three years after the thirty-eighth year of Xosrov, that is, June 629/630, at a time when Varaztiroc' *aspet* was *marzpan* or governor of Armenia. The History attributed to Sebeos records that Varaztiroc' was appointed *marzpan* of Armenia by Xosrov's short-lived successor, Kawat II, in 628, and that he fled from Armenia following “a great altercation” with Rostom, prince of Atrpatakan, in the winter of either 631–632 or, more probably, 632–633.¹⁷⁴ The inscription confirms that he held the office reported in the text at the relevant time. It also reveals that the hereditary Bagratuni title *aspet* was still current. This corroborates the evidence in the History attributed to Sebeos, where Varaztiroc' is regularly identified simply as the *aspet* without being named.¹⁷⁵

The epigraphic record is no less important in recording the award of Byzantine honorific titles to Armenians.¹⁷⁶ The inscription at Mren (A.7) opens with a reference to the all-praiseworthy *patrikios*, *kouropalates*, and *sparapet* of Armenia and Asorik'—a unique combination of honors which could belong only to the preeminent figure within Armenia at this time. By contrast, the founder of the church at Ałaman (A.4) is identified as Grigor *etustr*, the Armenian form of the middle-ranking imperial title of *illustris*.¹⁷⁷ Finally, the tomb-

¹⁷⁴ Appointment: Sebeos, 128.36–129.2. Flight: Sebeos, 132.12–35 and Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos*, 2:229.

¹⁷⁵ Greenwood, “Sebeos,” 355–56 and n. 125.

¹⁷⁶ In the interests of clarity, I have adopted the conventions followed in *ODB* for Byzantine titles and offices rather than the Armenian transliterations of them as found in the inscriptions. The latter are inconsistent. However, for the sake of precision, the translations supplied in Appendix 1 do contain the exact transliterations.

¹⁷⁷ For a discussion of the titles awarded to members of the senatorial aristocracy and changes over time, see J. F. Haldon, *Byzantium in the Seventh Century*, rev. ed. (Cambridge, 1997), 161–72. Haldon maintains that the senatorial rank of *illustris* came to be supplanted during the reign of Justinian I by new, higher grades, of *magnificus*, *gloriosus*, and *gloriosissimus* and that the emperor awarded the title of *illustris* to a number of provincial officials and even *curiales* who had previously borne only the ranks of *spectabilis* and *clarissimus*. This downward shift in the status of *illustris* may also be observed within the *Miracula Sancti Demetrii*, which identifies a man of

stone of the blessed *tēr*/lord Artavazd Kamsarakan (A.13) recorded that he held the titles *apo hypaton*, *patrikios*, and prince of Armenia/*išxan Hayoc'*, and that his father Hrahat had been *patrikios* and *tēr Širakay ew Ašaruneac'*/lord of Širak and Ašarunik'. These inscriptions reveal that Armenians were awarded a range of Byzantine imperial titles, implying familiarity with a hierarchy of honors.¹⁷⁸ The historical texts attest a similar variety. The History attributed to Sebeos records that three prominent Armenians were accorded the title of *kouropalates*—Dawit' Saharuni, Varaztiroc', and Hamazasp Mamikonean—and that several others were appointed *patrikios*.¹⁷⁹ The passage recording the elevation of Hamazasp *tēr Mamikonēic'*/lord of the Mamikoneans to the high rank of *kouropalates* by Constans II in 655 also reports that the emperor granted "honors" to other princes, including, it seems, imperial titles.¹⁸⁰ The *History of Aṭuank'* supports this interpretation. It records that on submitting to Constans II, the prince of Aṭuank', Ĵuanšēr, received from him the titles of *apo hypaton*, *protopatrikios*, as well as the unique *arewelic' kusakal*/governor of the East.¹⁸¹ Moreover, the passage alleges that Ĵuanšēr was accorded a remarkable discretion by Constans II, to distribute imperial titles as he thought appropriate: "And he made him *protopatrikios* and had conveyed to him the honor of *patrikios* and *hypatos* and *apo hypaton* and *stratelates* and *elist/illustiris* for one thousand two hundred men, so that to whom he himself might wish, he could bestow that."¹⁸² It seems, therefore, that Constans II entrusted his principal client in the eastern Caucasus, Ĵuanšēr, with the responsibility for attracting putative imperial clients through the concession of a range of titles, from *patrikios* to *illustiris*. The coincidence of *etustr* in the Aṭaman inscription (A.4) and *elist* in the above list is striking, confirming the distribution of lesser imperial titles. As will be discussed below, there seems to have been a concerted effort on the part of both Heraclius and Constans II to attract a range of supporters from the Armenian, Albanian, and Persian élite and to tie them into the ramified political structures of the empire through the grant of imperial honors.

However, the inscriptions are not solely concerned with foreign titles and honors. They also corroborate the contemporary use of three Armenian social terms: *tēr*, translated as "lord," *tanutēr*, "lord of the family," and *išxan Hayoc'*, "prince of Armenia." All three feature in the History attributed to Sebeos.¹⁸³ The first textual reference to a prince with a wider political authority over Armenia occurs in connection with Dawit' Saharuni; he is

good birth as one of 'the so-called *illustrioi*': P. Lemerle, *Les plus anciens recueils des Miracles de saint Démétrius*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1979), 1:161.

¹⁷⁸ See "Hypatos," *ODB* 2:963; "Illustiris," 2:986; "Kouropalates," 2:1157; and "Patrikios," 3:1600.

¹⁷⁹ Appointments as *kouropalates*: Sebeos, 133.32 (Dawit' Saharuni); 144.25–29 (Varaztiroc'); and 175.10 (Hamazasp Mamikonean). Appointments as *patrikios*: Sebeos, 67.23 (Vard Mamikonean); 104.23 (Atat Xorxoruni); 132.31–32 (Varaztiroc'); and 139.5–6 (T'ëodoros Řštuni).

¹⁸⁰ Sebeos, 175.9–12.

¹⁸¹ *Patmut'wun Aṭuanić*, 182.9–10; Dowsett, *Caucasian Albanians*, 117. The title *prōton patrik*, that is *protopatrikios*, implies a singular precedence. The History attributed to Sebeos records that in ca. 632 Heraclius honored Varaztiroc' "more than all the *patriks* who were in his kingdom," a phrase which implies that he received a similar honor: Sebeos, 132.31–32. The history of this title is obscure, beyond the fact that it emerged in the late 4th century and that Varazbakur *protopatrikios* and *comes* of Opsikion was the last holder of the title (killed in 711); see Theophanes, *Chronographia*, 1:380.14–15 and A. B. Karamaloude, "Παρατηρήσεις στο θεσμό του πρωτοπατρικίου πρώιμο βυζάντινο," *Σύμμεικτα* 5 (1983): 161–68. In the 7th century, the award of this singular honor seems to be restricted to prominent client princes from the Caucasus. In this respect, it mirrors the award of the title *kouropalates*. I am very grateful to L. MacCoull for pointing out that this may be compared with the 3d century Palmyrene Vaballathus, named *Corrector totius Orientis*.

¹⁸² *Patmut'wun Aṭuanić*, 182.2–4; Dowsett, *Caucasian Albanians*, 116–17.

¹⁸³ For the frequency of *tēr* and *tanutēr*, see the entries for "lord" and "tanutēr/headship" in Thomson and

appointed as *išxan i veray amenayn ašxarhacʿn*, “prince over all the countries,” as well as being given the title of *kouropalates*.¹⁸⁴ Although it is incomplete, the inscription at Mren (A.7) seems to confirm the award of both titles of Dawitʿ. The coincidence in social terminology between the literary and epigraphic sources even extends to the parallel omission of one notable term, namely, *naxarar*. This is conspicuous by its absence from both the latest notices in the History attributed to Sebeos and the corpus of Armenian inscriptions.¹⁸⁵ The exact meaning of these terms and the significance of their frequency will be discussed below. For the present it is sufficient to note the close coincidence in terminology across the two classes of primary material, supporting the proposition that these Armenian historical texts have retained their original form in spite of their late manuscript traditions.

This initial survey prompts one further observation. Both the inscriptions and the Histories reveal that an individual Armenian prince could be defined in several ways at the same time. Thus Hamazasp Mamikonean is described in the History attributed to Sebeos as lord of the Mamikoneans, *kouropalates*, and someone holding the office of prince of the country of Armenia.¹⁸⁶ In other words, he is presented in terms of precedence within the Mamikonean house, in terms of his Byzantine title, and in terms of his political headship of Armenia as client of Constans II. The choice of which title to use within an inscription is therefore very significant, reflecting how contemporaries perceived themselves and their identity or wished others to recognize their status. The inscription at Ałaman (A.4) is particularly revealing in this respect; the founder Grigor chose very deliberately to employ his imperial honor in preference to an Armenian social term. By contrast, Nerseh is defined in the synchronism simply as *tēr Širakay ew Ašaruneacʿ*, “lord of Širak and Ašarunikʿ,” without reference to any Byzantine title.¹⁸⁷ A similar preference may also be detected when imperial titles occur in conjunction with Armenian terms. At Tʿalin (A.12), Nerseh is defined as *apo hypaton* and *patrikios* before he is identified as *tēr Širakay ew Ašaruneacʿ*, whereas at Naxčavan/Noramanuk (A.13), Hrahat is titled *patrikios* ahead of *tēr Širakay ew Ašaruneacʿ*. This order may reflect the relative significance attached to each element.

Three of the inscriptions contribute directly to the study of Armenian social structure through their use of complex synchronisms. Far from being a random collection of indicators, the sequence of components within each synchronism was carefully devised to re-

Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos*, 2:324 and 330. For *išxan Hayocʿ*, see Sebeos, 138.33, 143.24–25, 169.14–15 (all relating to Tʿēodoros Rštuni) and 174.29 and 175.11 (both referring to Hamazasp Mamikonean).

¹⁸⁴ Sebeos, 133.31–32.

¹⁸⁵ The last reference appears in Sebeos, 149.7.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 175.10–11.

¹⁸⁷ The Long Recension of the geographical text attributed to Ananias of Širak, the *Ašxarhacʿoycʿ*, refers to one *imastunn Nerseh Kamsarakan patrikn Širakay ew Ašoruneacʿ tēr*, “the wise Nerseh Kamsarakan, *patrik*, lord of Širak and Ašorunikʿ”: *Ašxarhacʿoycʿ Mousesi Xorenačʿwoy. Géographie de Moïse de Corène*, ed. and trans. A. Soukry (Venice, 1881), facsimile reproduction, with new introduction by R. H. Hewsen (Delmar, N.Y., 1994), 18.28–29; R. H. Hewsen, *The Geography of Ananias of Širak (Ašxarhacʿoycʿ). The Long and Short Recensions*, Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients, Reihe B 77 (Wiesbaden, 1991), 50 and n. 31. Although Hewsen equates this Nerseh with the Nerseh Kamsarakan who was appointed *išxan Hayocʿ* by Justinian II at the end of the 7th century, there appears to be no reason why he should not be identified with that Nerseh *tēr Širakay ew Ašaruneacʿ* named in the inscriptions at Ałaman (A.4) and Mren (A.7). This complements Hewsen’s statement that “L, the original recension of the *AŠH*, was written within a forty-five-year period, between 591 and 636” (Hewsen, *Geography*, 33). However, it should also be noted that the reference occurs at the end of a passage describing the cities of Africa. This context is difficult to explain, prompting Hewsen to conclude that it is a later interpolation (*ibid.*, 96 n. 31).

flect the existing social order in the vicinity of the foundation as perceived by a contemporary. The synchronism at Bagaran (A.3) is arranged as follows: Persian king, *marzpan*, local Armenian lord (*tēr*), and finally a cleric, although the damaged condition of this part of the inscription makes it unclear whether this figure was the *kat'olikos* Ezr, as Orbeli maintained, or the local bishop.¹⁸⁸ Thus there is a hierarchy, stretching from a supranational figure to his governor and then the Armenian lord in control of the district. The inscriptions at Ałaman (A.4) and Mren (A.7) broadly follow this sequence, although both reveal intriguing variation. At Ałaman, the sequence is emperor, local Armenian lord, and then local bishop. Significantly, the inscription omits any intermediary figure between the emperor, Heraclius, and the local lord, Nerseh, implying a direct relationship between them. The Mren synchronism, dating from two years later, is similar to that at Bagaran in structure, albeit with a Byzantine rather than Persian orientation: emperor, the authority of someone who was simultaneously *patrikios*, *kouropalates*, and *sparapet Hayoc' ew Asorwoc'*, local bishop, and local *tanutēr*. Once again, the social order is presented as operating on three levels: emperor, principal imperial representative, and local lord and bishop. On the basis of this evidence, it seems that after 638 Heraclius sought to control Armenia through a single, designated client. This approach to the government of Armenia was maintained during the first decade of the reign of Constans II. Only when T'ēodoros Ēštuni transferred his allegiance to Mu'āwiya in 652 did individual princes once again seek direct contact with the emperor. The History attributed to Sebeos records how Constans II advanced to Karin the following year and there received the submission of a disparate group of Armenian princes and their armed forces, comprising those who were from Fourth Armenia and those who had left "the Ēštunian"—in other words those who had repudiated the authority of T'ēodoros Ēštuni following his political volte-face and wished to renew their ties with Constans II.¹⁸⁹ This state of affairs, whereby Armenian princes entered into a direct relationship with the emperor, was short-lived, lasting only until his appointment of Mušeł Mamikonean as *išxan Hayoc' heceloc'n*, "prince of the Armenian cavalry."¹⁹⁰ That new office challenged the status of T'ēodoros Ēštuni as *išxan Hayoc'* and seems to reflect a general power of command over those Armenian princes who had refused to collaborate with Mu'āwiya. Intriguingly, this innovation did not outlive T'ēodoros. After 654, the sources report the intense competition between the outside powers to appoint their own client to the office of *išxan Hayoc'*. Unfortunately it is at this moment that contacts and relationships at a local level disappear from view.

With this framework in mind, let us now turn to examine the social status of the individual sponsors and the honorific titles associated with them. The church at Bagaran (A.3) was founded by the local lord, But Aruețean. He is identified solely in terms of the Armenian social term *tēr*. This term designates the head of an Armenian noble family within a district or districts under the control of that house. It is always found in an Armenian

¹⁸⁸ Orbeli, *Izbrannye trudy*, 376–77. Orbeli proposed that this part of the inscription had originally named the *kat'olikos* Ezr but that this reference had been deliberately erased by someone opposed to his pro-Greek, Chalcedonian views. However, the structure of the other Armenian inscriptions, all of which identify the local bishop in this context, undermines this contention. The damage need not be intentional but may simply be caused by weathering.

¹⁸⁹ Sebeos, 165.17–31.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 166.17–18.

context and is always applied to an Armenian. It was never created or conferred by an external power. Although such powers might seek to influence who held the title, they did not determine whether or not someone could lay claim to that title. That right was based upon kinship.

The inscription at Ałaman (A.4) records that the small church was founded by Grigor *etustr* and his wife, Mariam, in October 636/637. As the synchronism refers specifically to Nerseh as *tēr Širakay ew Ašaruneacʿ*, it is clear that Grigor did not hold the status of lord of the district in which his foundation was located. At the same time, however, the very act of founding a church attests a strong attachment between Grigor and the site. Frustratingly, the inscription does not indicate the basis for that attachment, but it seems most likely that Grigor held responsibility within the district under the lordship of Nerseh. Although his family origin and Armenian social status remain unknown, as noted previously, Grigor held the honorific rank *illustris*. It seems, therefore, that Grigor preferred to define his status in terms of this middle-ranking imperial title, as someone who belonged within the extended political order of the Byzantine Empire. This inscription is significant for three principal reasons. It indicates that someone other than the local lord nevertheless had sufficient capital resources to found a church, albeit of extremely modest size. It confirms that imperial titles were distributed beneath the level of the local lord, attesting a considerable down-reach. Third, as noted above, when the church was completed in 636/637, there was no single figure who was recognized in this district of Armenia acting as an intermediary between emperor and local lord.¹⁹¹

The identity of the founder of Mren remains contentious. Although Orbeli and others were correct in identifying the anonymous *patrikios*, *kouropalates*, and *sparapet* *Hayocʿ ew Asorwocʿ* as Dawitʿ Saharuni, it is worth remembering that this reference forms part of the synchronism rather than the dedication and thus has no obvious role in determining the identity of the sponsor.¹⁹² Indeed, the scope of the intercession appears to run counter to the proposition that Dawitʿ was responsible. The church is described as being for the benefit of the “Kamsarakankʿ, Mren and all [?],” suggesting that a member of this house was responsible for its construction. There is, however, no extant inscription in which the original benefactor is also mentioned in the synchronism, and so it is unclear how such duplication would have been tackled. Intriguingly, the synchronism at Mren applies a very positive epithet to the unnamed individual; in addition to listing the various honors and offices he held, the inscription also describes him as *amenagov*, “all-praiseworthy.” The fact that such an epithet qualifies an Armenian figure rather than an emperor is unique and may reflect, albeit implicitly, the direct involvement of Dawitʿ Saharuni in the foundation. Moreover, it is conceivable that Dawitʿ Saharuni was himself a junior member of the Kamsarakan house, promoted by Heraclius to serve as his principal client within Armenia. This

¹⁹¹ This suggests that the authority of Mžēž Gnuni, the *zawrawar* or general of Armenia at this time, was not recognized in every district of Armenia. It is worth recalling that Sasanian influence persisted in Armenia much later than one might have expected—the *sparapet*, Mušet Mamikonean, and Grigor, lord of Siwnikʿ, answered the call to arms in autumn 637 and died in battle at Qādisiyya on 6 January 638: *Patmutʿiwn Atuanicʿ*, 173.16–20; Dowsett, *Caucasian Albanians*, 110; and Sebeos, 137.13–20. Armenian ties with Persia were severed at the end of the 630s and not the beginning of this decade. This is the context in which Dawitʿ Saharuni was appointed “prince over all the countries of Armenia”: Sebeos, 133.31–32.

¹⁹² Dawitʿ Saharuni is titled *kouropalates* and identified as responsible for this church in the History of John Catholicos: Yovhannēs Drasxanakertcʿi, 80.20–26; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs Drasxanakertcʿi*, 19.2.

would justify the range of new titles accorded to him as well as explaining the circumstances in which the existing head of the Kamsarakan house, Nerseh, could be named in the synchronism without apparently having a role in the foundation. It is worth noting that while Nerseh is defined as *tēr Širakay ew Ašaruneac'*, he is also accorded the title *tanutēr*. *Tanutēr* is much less frequently employed than *tēr* but seems to have had a broadly similar meaning, identifying the head of a single house. It is clear from this inscription that Nerseh was both *tanutēr* and *tēr* at the same time. The difference between the two terms is hard to explain, but it may revolve around the issue of external recognition. In the History attributed to Sebeos, *tanutēr* occurs only in circumstances where the headship of a house is being confirmed by an external authority—usually Xosrov II, although on the last occasion it is Constans II. Thus, in my view, *tanutēr* identifies a *tēr* whose headship has been specifically recognized by an outside power.

The dedication inscription at Aruč (A.11) is not beset with such uncertainties. It asserts confidently that the church was founded by Grigor Mamikonean, *išxan Hayoc'*, and his wife, Heḫinē. Although Grigor is identified as a Mamikonean, his exact status within that house is not specified. Instead he is described simply as “prince of Armenia.” This title expresses a much broader political authority within Armenia, one that was not restricted to a single family or a particular district. It was used to denote the principal client of an external power through whom Armenia was governed and Armenian military potential exploited. In this instance it reflects Grigor’s role as the principal Armenian client of Mu‘āwiya. The inscription appears to reflect a desire on the part of Grigor to be defined in terms of his Mamikonean origin and in terms of his premier Armenian rank. As such, it may be compared usefully with the later inscriptions from T‘alin (A.12) and Naxčavan/Noramanuk (A.13). In the former, Nerseh is described in terms of his Byzantine titles and as *tēr Širakay ew Ašaruneac'*; by contrast the latter defines his grandson Artavazd Kamsarakan in terms of his imperial honors once again and as *išxan Hayoc'*. When these three inscriptions are examined collectively, a pattern can be detected. The two figures holding the title “prince of Armenia” are both defined in terms of their family origin—Mamikonean and Kamsarakan respectively—but are not accorded specific status within these houses. By contrast the two figures who did not hold the title *išxan Hayoc'*, namely, Nerseh and his son Hrahat, are both described as *tēr Širakay ew Ašaruneac'* but are not identified explicitly as members of the Kamsarakan family. Evidently the convention was to use the foremost title, and *išxan Hayoc'* took priority over *tēr*. It does not follow that Grigor and Artavazd did not also enjoy headship of their houses, but rather that *tēr* was the less significant title in the context of Armenian social terminology and therefore omitted. Indeed, the apparent determination of Grigor and Artavazd to specify their Mamikonean and Kamsarakan origins seems to reflect how keenly these identities were felt.

The inscriptions of T‘alin (A.12) and Naxčavan/Noramanuk (A.13) yield valuable findings of their own because they link together three generations of Kamsarakank': Nerseh, Hrahat, and Artavazd. Both their imperial and Armenian titles repay close investigation. As we have noted, Nerseh was titled *apo hypaton*, *patrikios*, and *tēr Širakay ew Ašaruneac'*; Hrahat was merely *patrikios* and *tēr Širakay ew Ašaruneac'*; while the blessed *tēr* Artavazd Kamsarakan held the titles *apo hypaton patrikios* and *išxan Hayoc'*. Following standard Byzantine practice, imperial honors were personal, *ad hominem* awards that did not pass automatically from father to son but had to be conferred individually. It is significant that Artavazd

regained the rank of *apo hypaton*, previously enjoyed by his grandfather Nerseh but not by his father Hrahat. These very precise changes in entitlement point to continued Byzantine influence within those northwestern districts of Armenia under Kamsarakan control during the first half of the eighth century. The inscription at Naxčavan/Noramanuk (A.13) is also significant because it represents the only extant record of the elevation of Artavazd to the rank of *išxan Hayocʿ*. The period of his tenure remains conjectural but should probably be placed between 720 and 760.¹⁹³ This inscription suggests that the record of appointments to this office in the eighth century is incomplete. However, there is an alternative solution. The combination of this rank with two imperial honors implies that Artavazd may have been promoted to this office by a Byzantine emperor, as a rival to the caliph's preferred client. Far from being unprecedented, the elevation of a rival figure to the same office was familiar practice in the constant competition for advantage within Armenia played out by opposing powers. This would explain why Artavazd failed to register in the standard sequence of *išxankʿ Hayocʿ*.¹⁹⁴

Hitherto this study of Armenian social structure has been focused primarily upon the male elite. However, the Armenian inscriptions also reveal something of the powers and responsibilities of noble-born women in early medieval Armenia, as wives, widows, and figures of importance in their own right. Six of the Armenian inscriptions from Armenia identify the wife of the founder: the unnamed wife of Sahak Kamsarakan at Tekor (A.1); Annay, widow of But Aruețean, at Bagaran (A.3); Mariam, wife of Grigor *etustr*, at Ałaman (A.4); Heřinē, wife of Grigor Mamikonean, at Aruč (A.11); Šušan, wife of Nerseh, at Tʿalin (A.12); and Šušan Mamikonean, wife of Artavazd Kamsarakan, at Naxčavan/Noramanuk (A.13). It could be argued that these inscriptions simply reflect the proper concern of a Christian husband for the spiritual welfare of his wife, as expressed in Ephesians 5:25, and thus they should not be interpreted as proving joint responsibility for these constructions.¹⁹⁵ However, the inscription at Ałaman (A.4) employs a first person plural *šinēcʿakʿ*, “we built,” supporting the contention that wives could play a more active role than has previously been supposed. The inscription at Bagaran (A.3) confirms this. After the murder of But, the text reveals that his widow, Annay, took over responsibility for the completion of the church, a task that took three years. There can be little doubt that Annay retained control of sufficient material and human resources to enable the construction to be completed. The capacity in which Annay controlled these resources is unclear. Was it as widow, as guardian for her children, or as a noble-born daughter with lands and resources of her own? The additional intercession appended by Annay to the original conclusion is also instructive. In asking for God's protection over herself and her children, Annay seems to be indicating her present concern that they were all in danger. Unfortunately the outcome of these events is—and will remain—obscure.

The epitaph to Artavazd Kamsarakan at Naxčavan/Noramanuk (A.13) also contains invaluable information. Artavazd is described as the husband of Šušan Mamikonean. This

¹⁹³ For a full discussion of the date of this inscription, see below.

¹⁹⁴ See A. N. Ter-Ghevondian, “Le prince d'Arménie à l'époque de la domination arabe,” *REArm* 3 (1966): 185–200; J. Laurent, *L'Arménie entre Byzance et l'Islam depuis la conquête arabe jusqu'en 886*, Nouvelle édition revue et mise à jour par M. Canard (Lisbon, 1980), app. 4.1, “Le Prince d'Arménie ou chef ‘Arménien’ de l'Arménie du VIIe au IXe siècle,” 400–407.

¹⁹⁵ Eph. 5:25: “Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”

statement is significant in two respects. Instead of Šušan being described as the wife of Artavazd, Artavazd is described as the husband of Šušan. This suggests that the epitaph was commissioned by Šušan, who had outlived her husband. Second, Šušan is defined in terms of her family origin, as a Mamikonean, rather than in terms of her kinship by marriage, as a Kamsarakan. Again this reassertion of her earlier, Mamikonean, identity strongly implies that Šušan was alive when the inscription was carved and that she was involved in its composition. It is unclear why she should decide to revert back to her original Mamikonean kinship, but it is possible that she expected or hoped to benefit from the ongoing protection of that house.

Admittedly these inscriptions supply very limited information about the responsibilities of noble-born women in Armenia in the period. However, they provide a context within which three discrete narratives may be interpreted. Book 2, chapter 38 of the *History of Aṭuankʿ* records the intervention of Heṭinē, princess of Great Armenia and wife of Grigor Mamikonean, in securing relics of Grigor the Illuminator for Bishop Israyēl. He had been sent on a diplomatic mission by Varaz Trdat, prince of Aṭuankʿ, to the katʿoḡikos of Armenia, Sahak, and the “pious prince of the Ayraratean district,” Grigor.¹⁹⁶ Heṭinē interceded successfully with the katʿoḡikos and her husband on behalf of Israyēl, allegedly because she was from the *nahang* or province of Aṭuankʿ. This account therefore depicts Heṭinē taking an active role in church politics. The same History later records how queen Spram of Aṭuankʿ also became embroiled in theological controversy in the first decade of the eighth century.¹⁹⁷ While her husband Varaz Trdat was detained in Constantinople, Spram is presented as one of the two key figures in the political structure of Aṭuankʿ. Accusations of heretical belief were brought against her and provided the opportunity for Šeroy *patrikios* and *išxan Aṭuanicʿ*, prince of Aṭuankʿ, to mount a successful coup. Such charges enabled Šeroy to engineer the removal of both Spram and the katʿoḡikos of Aṭuankʿ, Nersēs, at the same time, leaving the way clear for him to seize power. Spram is therefore depicted as acting on behalf of her husband during his enforced absence, in much the same way that Annay took over responsibility for the construction of the church at Bagaran after her husband’s murder.

The final passage, from the History of Lewond, records the perplexing conduct of Princess Šušan following the Armenian victory at Vardanakert in 703.¹⁹⁸ When faced with a band of three hundred Arab soldiers being pursued by Armenian forces, she resolved to offer them sanctuary until they had recovered sufficiently, at which point she gave them packhorses from her own herd for onward transit to the caliph, ‘Abd al-Malik. Again, therefore, the narrative presents a noblewoman playing a significant political role, adopting an independent stance, negotiating directly with the caliph and being rewarded by him. Evidently her decision was respected by the pursuing Armenian forces; they did not violate the sanctuary provided by her. The account also contains the fascinating aside that

¹⁹⁶ *Patmutʿiwn Aṭuanicʿ*, 235.22–237.8; Dowsett, *Caucasian Albanians*, 152–53.

¹⁹⁷ *Patmutʿiwn Aṭuanicʿ*, 293.4–311.5.20; Dowsett, *Caucasian Albanians*, 189–202. These chapters chart the circumstances surrounding the deposition of Nersēs and the terms of the settlement that was eventually achieved. Although there must be some doubt as to the authenticity of the correspondence between the katʿoḡikos of Armenia, Etia, and the caliph, ‘Abd al-Malik, chapters 8–11 comprise the set of interlocking documents recording the settlement of the affair and form an exhaustive testamentary witness, shedding vital insight on contemporary social structure, land transfer *inter vivos* by both sale and grant, and dispute resolution.

¹⁹⁸ Lewond, 25.19–26.3; Arzoumanian, *History of Lewond*, 60.

she owned a herd of packhorses. Such an incidental detail is rarely provided in any account, let alone one that is focused upon the actions and decision of a princess. Even if one harbors reservations about the accuracy of the episode, it proves that the author of the passage had no hesitation in ascribing such actions to a princess, implying that they could operate as independent political figures. Again, the context in which Princess Šušān exercised leadership is missing; was she acting as widow, as custodian for her children, or as the sole heir to a district or region? Her princely origin is also unspecified. Although she has been identified as the wife of that Nerseh who founded the church at T'alin (A.12), this is clearly mistaken. The relevant colophon, quoted in full above, reports that Šušān Kam-sarakan was martyred in Xaṛan/Harrān in Mesopotamia in 706/707, and it seems highly likely that it is this Šušān who was the wife of Nerseh.¹⁹⁹ It is hard to envisage the circumstances in which the same person could have saved the lives of defeated Arab troops and been rewarded accordingly by the caliph in 703 and yet endured a martyr's death some three years later. Thus it seems easiest to interpret these two passages as referring to different individuals, both named Šušān.

Thus the inscriptions shed fresh insight into the leadership responsibilities undertaken by several noblewomen. They confirm the impression that emerges from the literary sources, that women could and did play a significant role in Armenian political life, controlling resources and making independent decisions. These activities are largely hidden from view and rarely register in the primary sources.

ARMENIA AND THE GREAT POWERS: SOCIAL EVOLUTION

Having examined the Armenian inscriptions as contemporary records of social terminology, let us now trace the impact of Sasanian, Byzantine, and Islamic rule upon Armenia as reflected through the whole corpus of inscriptions.

The inscriptions at Tekor (A.1) and Bagaran (A.3) illustrate two features of Sasanian provincial administration as it operated within Armenia before 628. The first, earlier part of the Tekor inscription, dated on the basis of the reference to the *kat'olikos* Yohan (ca. 478–490), notes the involvement of Manan *hazarapet* in the foundation. H. Ačaṙean maintained that Manan should be identified as Veh-Vehnam, named by Łazar as *hazarapet* of Armenia in 482 and 484.²⁰⁰ Whether or not one accepts his contention, it is clear from that text and the *Buzandaran* that the *hazarapet* acted in concert with the *marzpan* and that he had administrative responsibilities.²⁰¹ This office was usually held by Persians. In times of internal crisis, however, it could revert to an Armenian, as happened in 485 when Vahan Mamikonean was invested by Vałarš following the death of Peroz in battle against the

¹⁹⁹ Yovsēp'yan, *Yišatakarank'*, no. 17.

²⁰⁰ H. Ačaṙean, *Hayoc' Anjnanunneri Baġaran*, 5 vols. (Erevan, 1942–62; repr. Beirut, 1972), 3:193 and 5:119; Łazar P'arpec'i, *Patmut'iwu Hayoc' ew T'ut' ar Vahan Mamikonean*, ed. G. Tēr-Mkrtč'ean and S. Malxasean (Tiflis, 1904; repr. Delmar, N.Y., 1985), 118.39 and 164.20–21; trans. and commentary by R. W. Thomson, *The History of Łazar P'arpec'i*, Occasional Papers and Proceedings 4 (Atlanta, 1991), §66 and §91.

²⁰¹ Thus in Łazar's History, Veh-vehnam *hazarapet* appears only in the context of his support for other Persian officials, namely the *marzpan* of Armenia, Atrvšnasp Yozmandean (in 482) and then Nixor Všnaspdat (in 484). *Buzandaran* (attributed to P'awstos), *P'awstosi Buzandac'woy Patmut'iwu Hayoc'*, ed. K'. Patkanean (St. Petersburg, 1883; repr. Tiflis, 1912), facsimile reproduction, with introduction by N. G. Garsoġian (Delmar, N.Y., 1984), 26.3–5 and 56.25–28; trans. and extensive commentary by N. G. Garsoġian, *The Epic Histories (Buzandaran patmut'iwu)*, Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 8 (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), III.xii, IV.ii, and 531–32.

Hephthalites the previous year.²⁰² The record of Manan's involvement in the construction at Tekor is therefore intriguing. The inscription at Bagaran (A.3) also attests Sasanian influence, albeit in a different way. As we have seen, it employs regnal years of Xosrov II to locate the construction in time. Underlying this chronological choice is an implicit recognition of the sovereignty of the Persian king, that time itself was calculated by reference to his reign. However, the Bagaran inscription also provides useful evidence of the contemporary stresses within the Sasanian Empire after the death of Xosrov II. His successor, Kawat II, appointed a prominent Armenian, Varaztiroc', as *marzpan*. This broke with the convention, noted above, that Armenians should not hold the highest administrative office in their own country. Moreover, the decision to use the murder of Lord But Aruelean, securely dated to the thirty-eighth year of Xosrov II, as the starting point from which to reach forwards in time, is unprecedented. It implies that this was a period of chronological uncertainty within Armenia, at the very time when there was a rapid succession of short-lived kings and queens of Persia.

After 628, Armenia was partitioned, most probably on the basis of the frontier agreed in 387.²⁰³ However, it seems that the boundary was twice redrawn in favor of Heraclius, once as part of his pact with Xoream/Šahrvaraz in July 629, and again following Xoream's assassination in June 630, when the new regime under Boran was desperate to secure peace.²⁰⁴ J. D. Howard-Johnston has argued persuasively that the agreement negotiated by Boran's envoys at Beroea restored the frontier imposed by Maurice on Xosrov II in 591.²⁰⁵ This state of affairs is corroborated by Ezr's request to the emperor for the salt mines of Kotb in 631.²⁰⁶ Although we cannot tell whether the *kat'olikos* was seeking absolute possession or an interest in the income or tax receipts, it is clear that such a concession would not have been within the grant of Heraclius unless the frontier had been moved before this date. The surviving Armenian inscriptions from this decade were all located in the Byzantine sector. They reveal a concerted attempt by Heraclius to integrate Armenian princes and lords into the ramified political structures of the empire through the distribution of honors and other, more tangible benefits. The inscription at Ałaman (A.4) confirms that minor figures in Armenia, below the status of *tēr*, were included in the honors system, being rewarded with lesser titles. The inscriptions also show through their synchronisms that Byzantine correspondence was circulating in Armenia during the 630s. The regnal formulae and the eulogizing epithets applied to the emperor were extracted from the protocols of official correspondence, translated into Armenian, and used to locate the inscriptions in time. However, the limited geographical spread of the extant Armenian inscriptions should also be remembered. The literary sources attest a continuing Persian engagement with Armenia during this period. The History attributed to Sebeos reports that Varaztiroc' fled to Taron when Rostom the prince of Atrpatakan sent his brother as *darik'pet* to go and winter in Dvin and to seize Varaztiroc'.²⁰⁷ Thus Dvin was still under Persian control in winter 632–633. Moreover, several key Armenian princes

²⁰² Lazar P'arpec'i, 171.1–178.17; Thomson, *History of Lazar*, §94–§99.

²⁰³ Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos*, 2:222.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 2:223–24.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 2:227.

²⁰⁶ Ezr's negotiations with Heraclius over ecclesiastical union: Sebeos, 131.31–132.11.

²⁰⁷ Sebeos, 132.12–35; Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos*, 2:229.

continued to submit to the Persian king; indeed, the *sparapet* of Armenia, Mušet Mamikonean, and Grigor, lord of Siwnik', both fought and died for Yazkert III at the battle of al-Qādisiyya, on 6 January 638.

The inscription at Mren (A.7) needs to be interpreted in the light of Mušet's death. It shows that the principal client of Heraclius, Dawit' Saharuni, held the titles of *patrikios*, *kouropalates*, and *sparapet* of Armenia and Asorik'. Collectively these express a broad hegemony over the whole of Armenia. The combination of titles is unique, suggesting that Dawit' had taken over the authority previously enjoyed by Mušet Mamikonean in the Persian sector and reflected through the title *sparapet*. The extension of this authority beyond the boundaries of Armenia into Syria is unprecedented. It implies that Heraclius was prepared to make remarkable concessions in his efforts to forge an effective opposition to the Arab invasions after the fall of Syria, one in which Armenian military resources had a leading role to play. In giving Dawit' responsibility within Syria, it is possible that Heraclius envisaged the future deployment of Armenian forces in that region. The concession offered by Mu'āwiya to T'ēodoros Ēštuni in 652, that the cavalry of Armenia would not be summoned to Syria, should perhaps be interpreted in the context of this earlier agreement with Heraclius.²⁰⁸

One other feature of the radical approach taken by Heraclius to the government of Armenia should be noted. It appears that he promoted men from lesser princely families to high rank: first Mžēž Gnumi, then Dawit' Saharuni, and finally T'ēodoros Ēštuni. It is hard to know whether this was designed to foster loyalty, as each owed his prominence to imperial favor rather than accumulated family prestige, or whether it was simply a reaction to present circumstances. Until 638, the principal Mamikonean prince preferred to operate within the Persian political structure as *sparapet* of Armenia. Moreover, Varaztiroc' Bagratuni had been compelled to seek refuge within the empire in 633 and had been exiled for complicity in a plot against Heraclius in either 636 or 637.²⁰⁹ The emperor may therefore have had little choice but to use the talents of "new men." In terms of their loyalty, these men have a surprisingly good record once in office, suggesting that Heraclius and those advising Constans II chose well.²¹⁰ Indeed, the continuity of Byzantine influence within Armenia during the 640s, despite two substantial Arab raids, is impressive and cannot be explained solely in terms of the stationing of imperial forces there.²¹¹ Evidently a significant proportion of the élite believed that their future lay in relationship with the Byzantine Empire. T'ēodoros Ēštuni remained a faithful client until 652, when a sustained Arab assault upon the empire persuaded him that it would be in his own best interests to transfer allegiance to Mu'āwiya.²¹² But even then, as we have seen, Constans II had little difficulty in reestablishing ties with a large number of princes, reorganizing them under the authority of Mušet Mamikonean.²¹³ It is worth noting that this was achieved through

²⁰⁸ Sebeos, 164.22.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 132.12–133.23.

²¹⁰ Admittedly, Dawit' Saharuni was implicated in the plot of Athalarikos to oust Heraclius, but having seized power, he remained faithful until he was overthrown "by his soldiers."

²¹¹ First raid, culminating in the fall of Dvin on 6 October 640: Sebeos, 138.8–139.3; second raid, involving the capture of Arcap'k' and the successful countermeasures under T'ēodoros Ēštuni: Sebeos, 145.6–147.2. For the presence of imperial forces within Armenia under the *magister militum per Armeniam* and perhaps the *magister militum per Orientem* as well, see Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos*, 2:254–57 and 268–70.

²¹² Sebeos, 164.13–33.

²¹³ Ibid., 165.8–168.39.

a high-profile and potentially dangerous visit to Armenia undertaken by the emperor in person, indicative of the considerable strategic importance attached to Armenia and its military resources after the catastrophic losses sustained elsewhere in the Near East. That Constans was prepared to undertake a second extended progress through the Caucasus during the autumn of 659 and that this lasted into the springtime of the following year confirm the priority given to this northern theater of operations.²¹⁴ As the only practicable route for communication with *Atuank'*, Media, and beyond, Armenia possessed a particular significance. Thus it is unsurprising to discover that Hamazasp Mamikonean is presented in the *History of Atuank'* as the principal client of Constans, nor that he was swiftly removed at the conclusion of the first *fitna* and replaced by his brother Grigor.²¹⁵ This broke the first link in the chain of clients so carefully pieced together by Constans II, and thereby caused the whole network to collapse.

The inscription at Aruč (A.11) confirms that the traditional system of client management, according to which the leading Mamikonean prince operated as the principal client of the dominant foreign power, was retained by Mu'āwiya. The preeminence enjoyed by Grigor Mamikonean was expressed through the conventional title *išxan Hayoc'*. This approach to the government of Armenia would have been familiar to Heraclius, although his promotion of men from lesser princely houses has already been noted. Unlike the earlier Sasanian system of provincial administration, there was no separate Arab governor of Armenia at this time equivalent to the *marzpan*, nor is there any evidence for the imposition of a new administrative structure. Instead it seems that Mu'āwiya was content to entrust the government of Armenia to Grigor Mamikonean, imposing a nominal annual tribute of only five hundred *dahekans*, if Lewond's report is to be believed.²¹⁶ In the light of Constans II's ambitions for a network of clients, such a limited engagement with Armenia on the part of Mu'āwiya might appear surprising, but it is worth remembering the radically altered circumstances in which he was now operating. After 661, Armenia was no longer partitioned

²¹⁴ *Patmut'iwun Atuanic'*, 183.16–186.10. The passage reports that the visit took place in the “nineteenth year of the reign of Constans” (September 659/660) and notes that Constans wintered at Vałaršapat. This is corroborated by an unrelated passage at the end of the compilation which reports that Constans II attended the dedication of the church of St. Grigor at K'atākudašt, founded by Nersēs: *Patmut'iwun Atuanic'*, 317.5–11. This refers to the church of Zvart'noc'.

²¹⁵ *Patmut'iwun Atuanic'*, 181.4–6: “Then the very prudent Ĵuanšēr reached a pact with the Armenian commander and he encouraged him to turn to submission to the emperor of the Romans.” Thus Ĵuanšēr entered into relationship with Constans at the encouragement of Hamazasp Mamikonean. Their first meeting occurred in Media: *Patmut'iwun Atuanic'*, 183.16–184.15. Although the passage disparages Hamazasp for his jealousy at the gifts presented to Ĵuanšēr, its true significance lies in the recording of Hamazasp's presence in the imperial entourage accompanying Constans. Moreover, his jealousy becomes more understandable if one supposes that Hamazasp was recognized by contemporaries as Constans' principal client in the East. The position of Hamazasp became untenable as soon as Mu'āwiya had triumphed in the first *fitna*. Hamazasp was deposed in either 660 or 661 and replaced by his brother Grigor. For this relationship, see Garitte, *Narratio*, 405 (the Greek list of *kat'olikoi*, found in Par. gr. 900), 411 (the Georgian version of this list), and 438–39. A date of 660 or 661 tallies with the time in the office of *kouropalates* usually accorded to him, either three years (Yovhannēs Draxanakertc'i, 89.19–20) or four years (the Greek list of *kat'olikoi* mentioned above). Yovhannēs Draxanakertc'i also reports that the *kat'olikos* Nersēs urged Mu'āwiya to appoint Grigor as his successor; even if one may have doubts about the likelihood of this request, the involvement of Nersēs provides a useful *terminus ante quem* because he died in about 661. Thus *contra* Howard-Johnston (Thomson and Howard-Johnston, *Sebeos*, 2:287), the network of Caucasian clients unraveled very quickly after Mu'āwiya secured his authority. This would also supply the context for Constans' sudden switch to the western extremities of his empire after 661. His plans in the East had been wrecked and there was no imminent prospect of recovery.

²¹⁶ Lewond, 14.13–15; Arzoumanian, *History of Lewond*, 54.

between competing great powers. The frontier had moved westward into Asia Minor, relegating Armenia, from a strategic perspective, to something of a backwater. Moreover, the Muslim conquests had been achieved without utilizing the military resources of Armenia. Far from needing to recruit troops to defend against external threats, the principal challenge faced by Mu'āwiya was to find ways of channeling the focus of his existing forces away from internal dispute. Thus Mu'āwiya needed only to neutralize the potential threat posed by Armenia as a region of Christian military manpower, and this was achieved by conceding a broad discretion to Grigor Mamikonean. Unfortunately there is no eulogy of Grigor Mamikonean similar to that penned for his contemporary Ĵuanšēr and incorporated within the *History of Atuank*.²¹⁷ An indication of his power is supplied by the longevity of his regime—twenty-four years as *išxan Hayoc*—and by the size of the cathedral church at Aruč. It reflects not only the material resources available to Grigor but also the large numbers expected to attend upon the “great prince” Grigor and participate in religious ceremonies at Aruč.²¹⁸ The large cathedral church at T'alin should be interpreted in the same way, albeit as an expression of Kamsarakan rather than Mamikonean supremacy.

The inscription on the small church at T'alin (A.12) dedicated to the Mother of God confirms that churches continued to be founded at the end of the seventh century. Although the inscription itself does not specify a date—and can be distinguished from all the earlier foundation inscriptions on this basis—this can be determined approximately from a contemporary colophon. The inscription identifies Nerseh, *apo hypaton, patrikios, and tēr Širakay ew Ašaruneac* as being responsible for the foundation of the church. The colophon attached to the Armenian translation of Socrates Scholasticus's *Ecclesiastical History* has already been cited in full. The sponsor of the translation is named as “Lord Nersēh *apiwhipāt patrik*, you who are a builder of churches.” The titles found in the inscription are mirrored in the colophon. There can be little doubt that the founder of the church at T'alin and the patron of P'ilon Širakac'i were one and the same person. As we have seen, the colophon is dated securely to the year 695. The plural “churches” makes it more likely that construction of this church at T'alin had been started, if not completed, by this date.

The imperial titles accorded to Nerseh are important because they attest an ongoing Byzantine interest in and influence over this northwestern region of Armenia, one that barely registers in the literary sources. The practical advantages for the empire are apparent from a short, isolated passage found in the History of Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i. This records the victory of “the Kamsarakan and the *azatk* of Vanand” at the battle of Vardanakert over the commander Ogbay and his forces.²¹⁹ Although Lewond's History transfers this victory to Smbat Bagratuni, this seems to be the product of later rewriting, and the account crediting the Kamsarakan should probably be preferred.²²⁰ This engagement supports the contention that Nerseh Kamsarakan was an imperial client at the end of the seventh century; it also supplies the context for the martyrdom of Šušān Kamsarakan in Xaṛān/Ḥarrān, discussed above.

When the seventh-century Armenian inscriptions are examined collectively, they do not give the impression of wide-ranging social upheaval. Although the identity of the for-

²¹⁷ *Patmut'iwē Atuanic*, 172.21–201.15 and 221.3–237.8; Dowsett, *Caucasian Albanians*, 109–30 and 142–53.

²¹⁸ Grigor is called *barepašt ew erkiwtac yAstucoy*, “pious and God-fearing” (Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i, 90.2–3) and *išxan mec*, “great prince” (ibid., 91.23–24 and 93.16).

²¹⁹ Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i, 95.5–19; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc'i*, 21.1–4.

²²⁰ Lewond, 24.2–25.8; Arzoumanian, *History of Lewond*, 59–60.

eign power or the dominant Armenian prince might change, there were no dramatic developments in Armenian social structure. There is, for example, no evidence of any significant Arab settlement within Armenia in the immediate post-conquest period. Indeed, if the inscriptions and the structures to which they belong indicate change of any kind, it is the sudden availability of greater material resources to Armenian princes, enabling them to sponsor such constructions. It is impossible to say whether this was due to the retention of taxes previously remitted to the Sasanian state, to the takeover of land previously under state control, or to the sudden influx of Byzantine silver coins—or to a combination of all three. Far from being an era of unremitting warfare and oppression, the seventh century emerges as a time of stability, prosperity, and material development in Armenia, at least from the perspective of the élite.²²¹

Important historical insight into eighth-century Armenia is afforded by the epitaph of Artavazd Kamsarakan (A.13). It records that imperial honors were distributed to two generations of the Kamsarakan house, implying that Byzantine influence over northwestern Armenia persisted during the first half of the eighth century. Furthermore, the inscription refers to Artavazd as *išxan Hayocʻ*. As discussed above, this appointment does not register in any other source. One explanation for his omission from the standard sequence of appointments is that Artavazd acted as prince of Armenia on behalf of the emperor rather than the caliph. The fact that Artavazd was buried beneath a tombstone in an underground chamber supports this contention, albeit implicitly. Although such a practice appears to have been rare in Armenia at this time, at least in comparison with the characteristic funerary stelae, it was common in the Byzantine Empire.

The date of the inscription remains contentious. The epitaph reveals that Artavazd was survived by his wife, Šušān Mamikonean. Although her name does not appear in the literary sources, S. Kogean suggested that she was the anonymous princess who appears in the Life of St. Vahan, prince of Gołtʻn, ordering the saint to leave the monastery in Širak in which he had settled.²²² The colophon attached to this text asserts that it was composed by Artavazd, abbot of Erašxawor, seven years after Vahan's death. Vahan was martyred in "one hundred and eighty-six of the era" and "in the days of Šam/Hishām *amir [m]umin*, on that side of the river Epʻrat/Euphrates, in the city of Ėrucapʻ/Resafa."²²³ This combination of accurate, incidental detail points to a near-contemporary date of composition. In the light of the directing role played by this noblewoman, Kogean proposed that Artavazd Kamsarakan had died before this event.²²⁴ Although this argument is ingenious, it relies upon the anonymous "lady of Širak" and Šušān Mamikonean being one and the same person. On closer inspection, the exact title of the anonymous princess, the "lady of Širak," is

²²¹ N. G. Garsoïan, "The Arab Invasions and the Rise of the Bagratuni (640–884)," in *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, ed. R. G. Hovannisian, 2 vols. (New York, 1997), 1:118–25.

²²² S. Kogean, *Kamsarakannerē* (Vienna, 1926), 165. For the text itself, see Artavazd, *Vkayabanutʻiwn srboyn Vahanay Gołtʻnacʻwoy*, Sopʻerkʻ Haykakankʻ 13 (Venice, 1854). Excerpts from this appear in L. Ališan, *Hayapatum* (Venice, 1901), 250–53.

²²³ Matʻevosyan, *Hišatakaranner*, no. 38. For the date, see above, note 123. Lewond confirms that Šam was the Armenian equivalent of Hishām: "Again in his place Šam who is Hešm rules, 19 years." Lewond, 100.20–21; Arzoumanian, *History of Lewond*, 106. The Life itself records that "Ėrucapʻ was the settlement of Šam, the prince of the Arabs" (Artavazd, 35.1–2). This is corroborated by other sources and supports the argument that the date of composition indicated in the colophon is correct. Intriguingly, when traveling to Ėrucapʻ/Resafa in 737, Vahan visited Uřha/Edessa, where he worshiped *pʻrkēʻakan patkern*, "the Savior's image" (Artavazd, 34.19–22). This appears to be a very early, and hitherto unnoticed, reference to the famous Mandylion of Edessa.

²²⁴ Kogean's argument is repeated by Thierry, "Monuments chrétiens du vilayet de Kars (III)," 355.

found to be a matter of conjecture. In one version of the text, she is defined simply as *išxanakin*, “wife of the prince,” and in the other, she is called *tikin gawarin*, “the lady of the district.”²²⁵ It is probable that the district in question is Širak, but this detail is derived from another passage. The noblewoman is not identified as a widow or regent; again this is deduced from her actions. Critically, a princess of Širak need not have come from the Mamikonean house—if anything, this was exceptional. The fact that Šušan elected to define herself in this way rather than in terms of an ongoing political role within Širak may be significant. Thus there are several objections to Kogean’s proposition. It cannot be dismissed out of hand, but it is at best unsubstantiated. It follows from this argument that the epitaph of Artavazd need not have been carved before 737. The genealogy of the Kamsarakan house supports a later date. Nerseh Kamsarakan, appointed *išxan Hayoc’* by Justinian II in 689 and in power for only three or four years, is traditionally identified as the father of Nerseh, the sponsor of the church at T’alin, the grandfather of Hrahat and the great-grandfather of Artavazd Kamsarakan.²²⁶ Although not impossible, it is hard to fit four generations into the forty-four-year period between 691 and 735. It is possible that Artavazd Kamsarakan may have died as late as 760.

As has been noted previously, the churches at Zvart’noc’ and Aruč both carry Arabic inscriptions dating from the second half of the eighth century (A.19 and A.20). As such, they constitute important evidence for the presence of Arabs at or near these sites after 770. The middle inscription at Zvart’noc’ also reveals that Ilyās b. ‘Īsā interceded for his family and his village, implying a property interest of some kind. As has been observed previously, the very existence of these inscriptions raises the intriguing question of who had possession or control of these churches at this time. The fact that two of the most prominent churches in Armenia acquired Arabic inscriptions implies that these sites may not have been under exclusive Armenian control.

These inscriptions are also significant because they coincide chronologically with a change in approach to the government of Armenia after the ‘Abbāsīd revolution, one that can be traced through the History of Lewond and the numismatic record.²²⁷ Both sources attest a growing sophistication in the administration of Armenia and a greater down-reach into individual districts. The vast northern governorship previously held by Marwān b. Muḥammad was divided into several smaller provincial units. Governors were appointed and replaced with increasing regularity.²²⁸ Arab officials began to intervene at a local level in the collection of taxation, thereby challenging the authority of indigenous Armenian princes to regulate the affairs of their own territories. The History of Lewond reveals the violent reaction of the princes to these administrative changes. In the course of their rebellions in the 770s, both Artavazd and Mušeł Mamikonean are reported to have killed lo-

²²⁵ Artavazd, 29.16 and 74.10.

²²⁶ Garitte, *Narratio*, 405, 411, and 440; Step’anos Taronec’i, 100.23–101.16. According to Step’anos, in the year 140 of the Armenian era (691/692) Nersēh was succeeded as prince of Armenia by Smbat Bagratuni Biwratean, who held power for twenty years: Step’anos Taronec’i, 101.16–19.

²²⁷ For the numismatic evidence, see M. L. Bates, “The Dirham Mint of the Northern Provinces of the Umayyad Caliphate,” *Armenian Numismatic Journal* 15 (1989): 89–111; R. Vasmer, *Chronologie der arabischen Statthalter von Armenien unter den Abbasiden, von al-Saffach bis zur Krönung Aschots I., 750–887* (Vienna, 1931), 10–32; X. A. Mušetyan, “Abbasyan dramneri t’otarkumē xalifat’i ‘Arminia’ nahangum VIII–X darerum,” *IFZh* (1974) 4: 143–56 and appendix; M. Bonner, “The Mint of Hārūnābād and al-Hārūniyya, 168–171 H.,” *American Numismatic Society* ser. 2, 1 (1989): 171–93 and pls. 14 and 15.

²²⁸ For the standard list, see Laurent, *L’Arménie entre Byzance et l’Islam*, app. 4.2, 408–33.

cal tax collectors, operating in Širak and Bagrewand respectively.²²⁹ These inscriptions fit neatly into the context of greater Arab involvement in these districts.

Having exploited these Arabic inscriptions in support of the view that the ‘Abbāsid approach to the government of Armenia was far more intrusive, it should not be forgotten that those from Zvart‘noc’ also display several highly unusual features setting them apart from all other contemporary Arabic inscriptions. Although the exact wording of two of the inscriptions remains unresolved—a consequence not of their poor condition but rather the atypical nature of their content—Hoyland has securely identified two remarkable passages. The first inscription refers specifically to the governorship of one Yazīd b. Jarad and seems to correlate his tenure with the year A.H. 154. Although it is tempting to identify this individual as Yazīd b. Usayd as-Sulamī, governor of Armenia on at least three occasions during the eighth century, the reading does not support this.²³⁰ Such a synchronism is unprecedented in Arabic inscriptions. We have already seen, however, that seventh-century inscriptions in Armenia employed similar synchronisms. This Arabic inscription appears to be reflecting Armenian practice. In support of this contention, it is significant that the relevant passage identifies a second individual after Yazīd. Although his name cannot be read with confidence—it may be Bgr, Vgr, or another variant—it seems that this is because it is an Arabic rendering of an Armenian name. Thus the inscription is dated by reference to the *hijra*, the governorship of Yazīd, and the headship of an Armenian—a unique combination of elements in an Arabic inscription. Furthermore, we have already seen how Ilyās interceded for his whole family, his house, and his village. The startling conclusion is that these inscriptions represent a fusion of Arabic and Armenian elements. On the one hand, their language is Arabic, they employ *hijra* dates, and at least two of them invoke Allah; on the other, the synchronism and the scope of the intercession both sit very comfortably within the Armenian tradition. The marriage between al-Djahhāf and one of the daughters of Mušeł Mamikonean after the latter’s failed rebellion represents another expression of this process.²³¹

The latest Armenian inscription included in this corpus (A.14) also attests the changed conditions experienced within Armenia, albeit from the other side. The inscription records a small-scale, practical improvement undertaken by Uxtaytur and his brother rather than a grandiose extension, rebuilding, or decoration. Its limited nature seems significant. Moreover, the inclusion of the curse against anyone who destroyed the newly provided water course indicates a fear, and perhaps even an expectation, on their part that this would occur. Again this implies ongoing disturbance in the district. The tone of the inscription is supported by an otherwise isolated report in the History of Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc’i recording a massacre at T‘alin involving the killing of seven hundred people and the capture of one thousand two hundred.²³² This occurred during the eight-year tenure of Sion as kat’olikos of Armenia, ca. 767–775. Finally, it is worth recalling that this is one of only

²²⁹ Lewond, 138.12–14; Arzoumanian, *History of Lewond*, 129: “[Artavazd Mamikonean] arrived in the province of Širak, at the village of Kumayr, and he killed the assessor of tax (*hramanatar harkin*).” Lewond, 139.18–21; Arzoumanian, *History of Lewond*, 130: “[Mušeł Mamikonean] went into the province of Bagrewand and with him 60 men and having seized this collector of the tax (*zpahanjotsn harkin*), whose name was Apumčur, and those who were with him, he struck and put them to death with his sword. And he interrupted the collection of tax from this land.”

²³⁰ Laurent, *L’Arménie entre Byzance et l’Islam*, app. 4.2, nos. 27, 28, 29, and 33.

²³¹ Ibid., app. 3, “Les principautés arabes d’Arménie,” 383.

²³² Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc’i, 107.7–10; Maksoudian, *Yovhannēs Drasxanakertc’i*, 23.17.

two Armenian inscriptions to date from the eighth century, the other being the epitaph of Artavazd Kamsarakan (A.13). This sets into even sharper relief the prosperity and relative security enjoyed by much of Armenia for most of the seventh century and attested through the multiple church foundations.

CONCLUSION

The small size of this corpus belies its significance for the study of early medieval Armenian history. As authentic contemporary statements, these inscriptions afford important historical insight. Their value extends far beyond the naming of individual sponsors or providing exact dates for the construction of certain churches, important though these are. They attest something of the motivation behind such foundations. They confirm the sequence of chronological mechanisms employed in Armenia in the course of the seventh and eighth centuries. They operate as independent controls against which the social terminology found in the written sources may be tested. They reveal that members of the Armenian élite could be defined in more than one context at any one time; thus the founder of the church of the Mother of God at T^halin is identified as Nerseh *apo hypaton, patrikios*, and *tēr Širakay ew Ašaruneac*^h. Through the use of synchronisms, the inscriptions also reflect the political hierarchy that existed within Armenia during the 630s as perceived by a contemporary. This comprised three tiers: a single, dominant prince serving as the principal client of an external power; individual lords exercising power at the level of the district or *gawar*; and those who enjoyed a lesser, subordinate responsibility within the *gawar*, probably at the level of the village. The inscriptions also supply vital information about the conduct and capacity of noble-born women. Finally, they attest a bold initiative on the part of Heraclius to attract Armenian lords to his service through the distribution of imperial titles and attendant material rewards. A parallel initiative in the ecclesiastical sphere is attested by the inscriptions in Greek commissioned by the kat^holikoi Ezr and Nersēs III. Successive emperors recognized the strategic potential of Armenia and continued to confer titles, at least upon those lords who controlled districts to the north and west of the Araxes valley, up to the middle of the eighth century. This pattern of contact is largely ignored within the surviving written sources. The Arabic inscriptions at Zvart^hnoc^h (A.19) and Aruč (A.20) attest the change in approach to the administration of Armenia which took place after 760. Their very existence suggests direct Arab intervention, if not settlement, at the level of the district. The unprecedented style and content of two of the Arabic inscriptions may represent a synthesis of Arab and Armenian elements.

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I should like to express my thanks to the two anonymous readers for their valuable observations and suggestions, to Professor R. W. Thomson for his comments and his translation of the Georgian band inscription at Samšvildē, to Dr. R. Hoyland for his translation of the Arabic inscriptions, and to Charlotte Roueché for her willingness to share her epigraphic expertise.

Appendix 1

A Corpus of Early Medieval Armenian Inscriptions

The inscriptions have been transcribed in accordance with the Leiden Convention.

- [**Ⲛⲣ**] Letters restored by the editor as once having been inscribed but which are no longer preserved
- {**Ⲛⲣ**} Superfluous letters added in error by the engraver and excised by the editor
- <**Ⲛⲣ**> Letters added by the editor which the engraver has either omitted or for which he has by error inscribed other letters
- (**Ⲛⲣ**) Letters which complete words left in abbreviation in the text
- Ⲛⲣ** Letters of which sufficient traces remain to print them in the text but not enough to exclude other possible meanings
- [. . .] Lost or illegible letters equal to the number of dots for which no resolution is proposed
- [—] Lost or illegible letters of an uncertain number
- | Start of a new line on the stone where the text is not printed in the same configuration as on the stone

As far as possible, the transcriptions follow the layout of the original inscriptions. Each line of text has also been numbered. The band inscriptions have been set out differently, with each exterior face being allocated a letter in alphabetical sequence. The inscription at Naxčavan (A.8) is the one exception to this, the letters representing the sequence of individual blocks.

A. ARMENIA

Inscriptions in Armenian

1. Tekor: Late fifth century [478–490] and unknown (Fig. 1). In architrave above tympanum of western entrance.

Copied and published by L. Afišan, *Širak tetagrut'iw n pathkerac'oyc'* (Venice, 1881), 132, whence republished by K. Kostaneanc', *Vimakan Taregir. Čuc'ak žotovacoy arjanagrut'eanč Hayoc'* (St. Petersburg, 1913), 1; photographed and published, with full bibliography, by G. Yovsēp'ean, *Grč'ut'ean aruestě hin Hayoc' mēj. K'artēz hay hnagrut'ean (Hay gri giwti 1500 ameaki art'iw)* (Vařaršapat, 1913), no. 2 and pl. 2; published by N. Marr, “K datirovke ktitorskoj nadpisi Tekorskogo khrama,” *Khristianskij Vostok* 3.1 (1914): 56–71, whence republished by A. A. Manuč'aryan, *K'nnut'yun Hayastani IV–XI dareri šinararakan vkayageri* (Erevan, 1977), 39–40; separate photograph published by S. Der Nersessian, *L'art arménien* (Paris, 1977), fig. 32; separate photograph and squeeze published by M. E. Stone, D. Kouymjian, and H. Lehmann, *Album of Armenian Paleography* (Aarhus, 2002), 14, ill. 2 and 15, ill. 3.

- 1(5). [Ե] ՊԻՍԿ{Ա} <Ո> ՊՈՍԻ ԵՒ ՏԱՅՐՈՆԻ ՏԵԿՈՐՈՅ ՎԱՆԱՅ ԵՐԻՅՈՒ ԵՒ ՄԱՆԱՆԱՅ
 ՀԱՉԱՐԱՊԵՏԻ ՈՒՐԱՆԱՅ ՀՈՌՈՄԻ ՈՐՇ[—]
 2(4). ԵՒ ՀԻՄՆԱՐԿԵՅԱԻ ՏԵՂԻՍ Ի ԶԵՌՆ ՅՈՀԱՆՈՒ ՀԱՅՈՅ ԿԱԹ{Ա} <Ո> ՂԻԿՈՍՈՒԹԵԱՆ ԵՒ
 ՅՈՀԱՆՈՒ ԱՐՇԱՐՈՒՆԵԱՅ
 3. ՅԻԻՐ ԲԱՐԵԽԱՒՍՈՒԹԻԻՆ ԵՒ ԲՈՂՈՐ ԱԶԳԻՍ ԵՒ ԱՄՈՒՄՆԻ ԵՒ ՈՐԳԵԿԱՅ ԵՒ ՍԻՐԵԼԵԱՅ
 ԵՒ[—]
 4(2). ՄՐԲՈՅ ՍԱՐԳՍԻ
 5(1). ՍԱՀԱԿ ԿԱՄՍԱՐԱԿԱՆ ՇԻՆԵԱՅ ԶԱՅՍ ՎԿԱՅԱՐԱՆ

Sahak Kamsarakan built this martyrium of Saint Sargis for his intercession and of his whole family and wife and children and loved ones and [—]

And this site was founded by means of Yohan of the office of kat'olikos of Armenia and Yohan bishop of Aršarunik' and Tayron elder of the community of Tekor and Manan *hazarapet* of Uran Horom [—]

2.1 Hrip'simē: After 616/617 and before 628 (Fig. 2.1). Located on western elevation.

Copied and published by Y. Šahxat'unc', *Storagruṭ'wn kat'ulikē Ejmiacin ew hing gawarac'n Araratay*, 2 vols. (Ejmiacin, 1842), 1:264, whence republished by L. Ališan, *Ayrarat bnašxarh Hayastaneayc'* (Venice, 1890), 238; copied and published by G. Ovsepian, "Komitas kat'ulikosi mi nor arjana-gruṭ'wn," *Ararat* 10 (1898): 442, whence republished by Kostaneanc', *Vimakan Taregir*, 2; photographed and published by Yovsēp'ean, *K'artēz*, no. 3 and pl. 2; copied, drawn, and published by I. A. Orbeli, *Izbrannye trudy* (Erevan, 1963), 407; published by A. B. Eremian, *Khram Ripsimē* (Erevan, 1955), 26, whence republished by A. G. Abrahamyan, *Hayoc' gir ev grč'ut'yun* (Erevan, 1973), 83, and Manuč'aryan, *K'nnut'yun Hayastani*, 79; photographed and published by Stone, Kouymjian, and Lehmann, *Album*, 112 and Inscription 1.

1. ԵՍ ԿՈՄԻՏԱՍ ԵԿԵՂԵՅԱՊԱՆ ՄՐ
2. ԲՈՅ ՀՌԻ{Ի} ՓՍԻՄԷԻ ԿՈԶԵՅԱՅ ՅԱ
3. ԹՈՌ ՄՐԲՈՅՆ ԳՐԷԳՈՐԻ ՇԻՆԵՅԻ
4. ԶՏԱՃԱՐ ՄՐԲՈՅ ՎԿԱՅԻՅՍ Ք(ՐԻՍՏՈՍ)Ի

I Komitas sacristan of saint Hri{w}p'simē was summoned to the throne of saint Grēgor. I built the temple of these holy martyrs of Christ

2.2 Hrip'simē. Located on eastern elevation, interior.

Copied and published by Ovsepian, "Komitas," 442, whence republished by Kostaneanc', *Vimakan Taregir*, 2, whence republished by Manuč'aryan, *K'nnut'yun Hayastani*, 79.

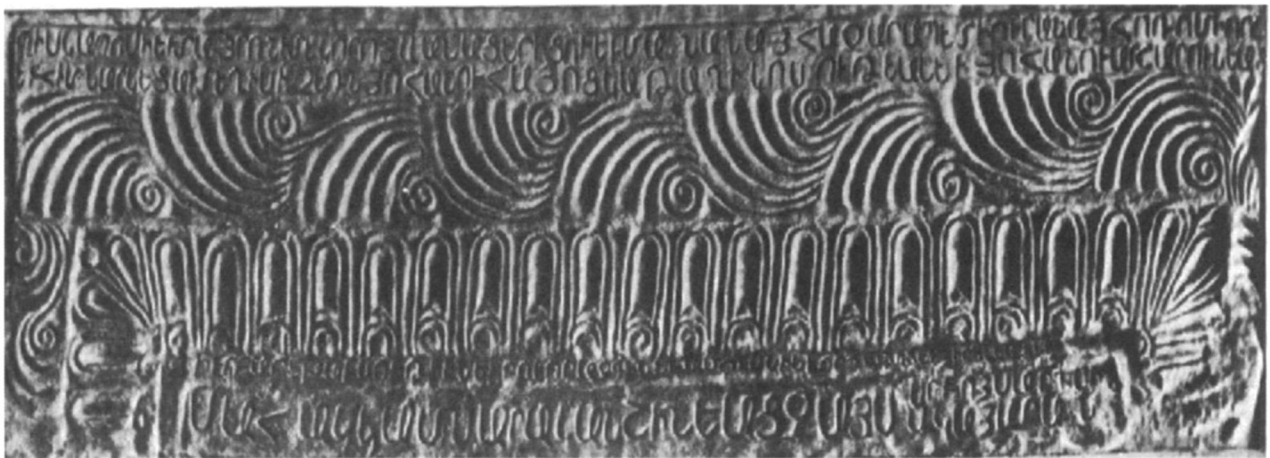
1. Ք(ՐԻՍՏՈՍ) Ա(ՍՏՈՒԱ)Ծ ՅԻՇԵԱ ԶԿՈՄԻՏԱՍ
2. ՀԱՅՈՅ ԿԱԹՈՂԻԿՈՍ ՇԻՆ
3. ԱԻՂ ՄՐԲՈՅ ՀՌԻՓՍԻՄԵԻ

Christ God, remember Komitas kat'olikos of Armenia, the builder of saint Hrip'simē

3. Bagaran: Completed 8 October 629 (Fig. 3). Single-line inscription at roof level, beginning on northern section of western elevation, running across western, southern, eastern, and northern apses and elevations, concluding at western face of northern apse.

Copied and published by N. Marr, "Imia But ili Bud v armianskoī nadpisi VII-go veka po R.Kh.," *Zapiski Imperatorskago Russkago Arkheologicheskago Obshchestva* 7 (St. Petersburg, 1892), 322; copied and published by Orbeli, *Izbrannye trudy*, 391, 393, whence republished, with separate photographs,

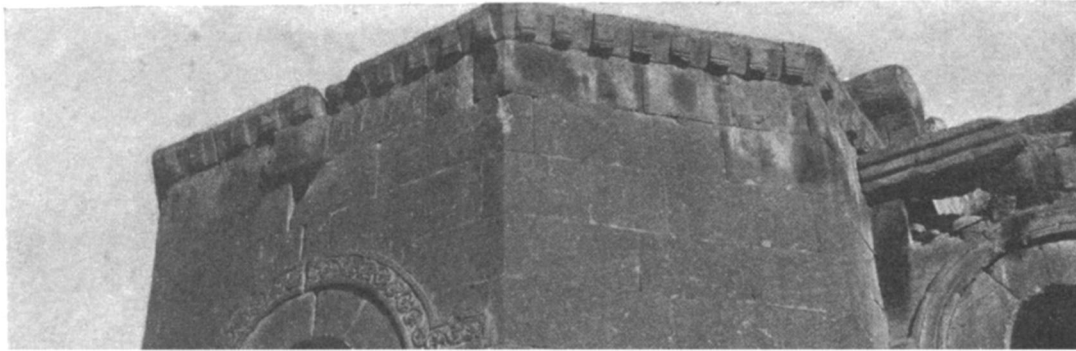
NOTE: The sequence and numbering of the figures reflects the sequence and numbering of the Corpus. There are no photographs of the Armenian inscriptions at Hrip'simē (A.2.2), Bagavan (A.5), and Naxčavan (A.8); the Greek inscription at Mastara (A.15); or the Arabic inscription at Aruč (A.20). The photographs used to illustrate the Armenian inscriptions at Bagaran (A.3) and Ałaman (A.4) were not taken for this purpose and reveal only a fragment. They remain, however, the only published impressions of these inscriptions, which are long since destroyed.



1 (Inscription A.1) Tekor (after S. Der Nersessian, *L'art arménien* [Paris, 1977], fig. 32)



2.1 (A.2.1) Hrip'simē (after G. Yovsēp'ean, *Grēut'ean aruestē hin Hayoc' mēj. K'artēz hay hnagrut'ean (Hay gri giwti 1500 ameaki ari'iu)* [Vałaršapat, 1913], pl. 2 and no. 3)



3 (A.3) Bagaran (after J. Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa*, 2 vols. [Vienna, 1918], 1: fig. 34). Although of poor quality, this photograph confirms the location of the inscription across the top row and Orbeli's readings of faces J and K.



4 (A.4) Alaman (after Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 2: fig. 602). The photograph confirms Orbeli's readings of faces H and I.



6 (A.6) Avan (after K. Łafadaryan, *Erevan. Miġnadaryan huřarjannerě ew vimakan arjanagrut'yunnerě* [Erevan, 1975], pl. 139)



7 (A.7) Mren (after Yovsēp'can, *K'artēz*, pl. 3 and no. 6)



9 (A.9) Zvart'noc' (after Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 1: fig. 31)



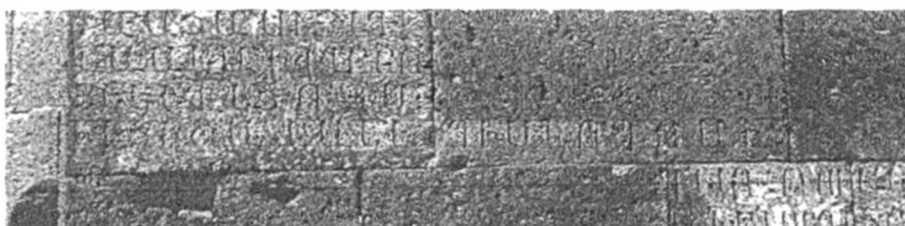
10.1 (A.10.1) Mastara (after Yovsēp'ean, *K'artēz*, pl. 4 and no. 7)



10.2 (A.10.2) Mastara (after Yovsēp'ean, *K'artēz*, pl. 5 and no. 8)



10.3 (A.10.3) Mastara (after V. L. Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture*, 7 vols. [Zug, 1980–90], 7: microfilm 159, C8, and with the kind permission of Dr. V. A. Parsegian)



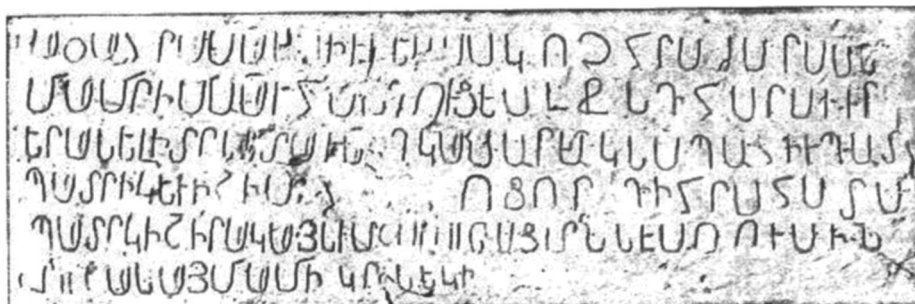
10.4 (A.10.4) Mastara (after Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture*, 7: microfiche 159, C9)



11 (A.11) Aruč (after Yovsēp'ean, *K'artēz*, pl. 6 and no. 9)



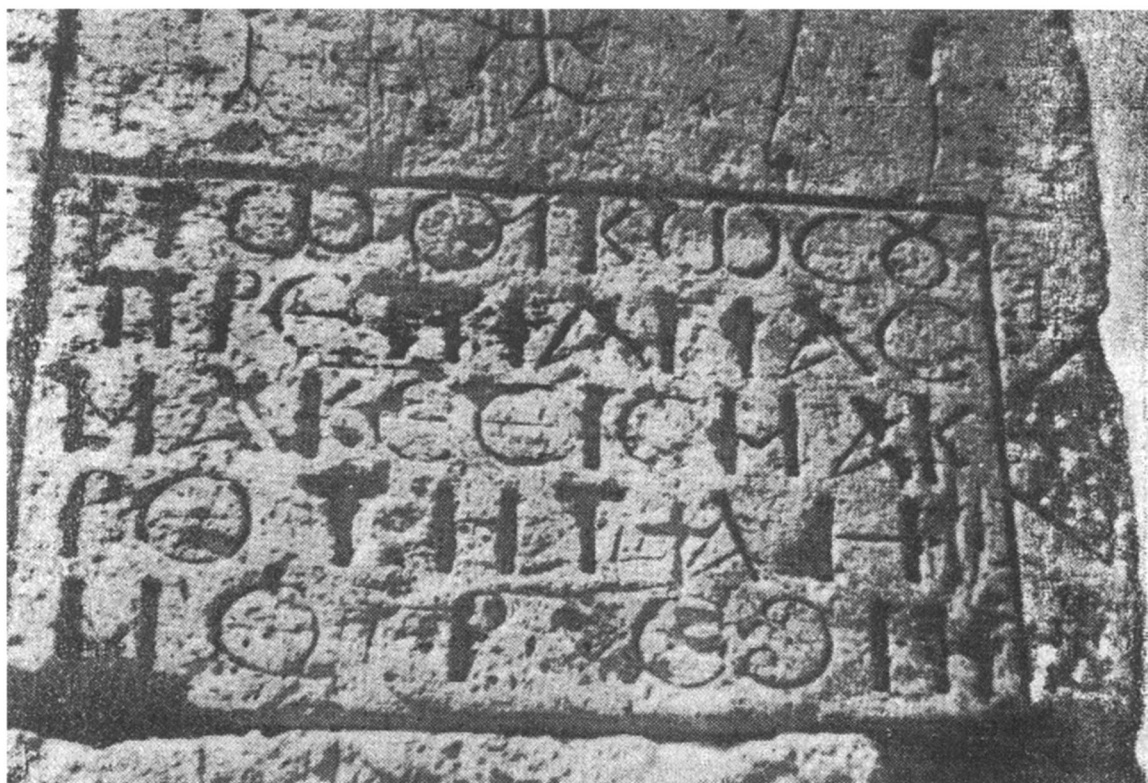
12 (A.12) T'alin (after I. A. Orbeli, *Izbrannye trudy* [Erevan, 1963], pl. LVIII)



13 (A.13) Naxčavan/Noramanuk (after Yovsēp'ean, *K'artēz*, pl. 5 and no. 10)



14 (A.14) T'alin/Uxtaytur (after Yovsēp'ean, *K'artēz*, pl. 7 and no. 11)



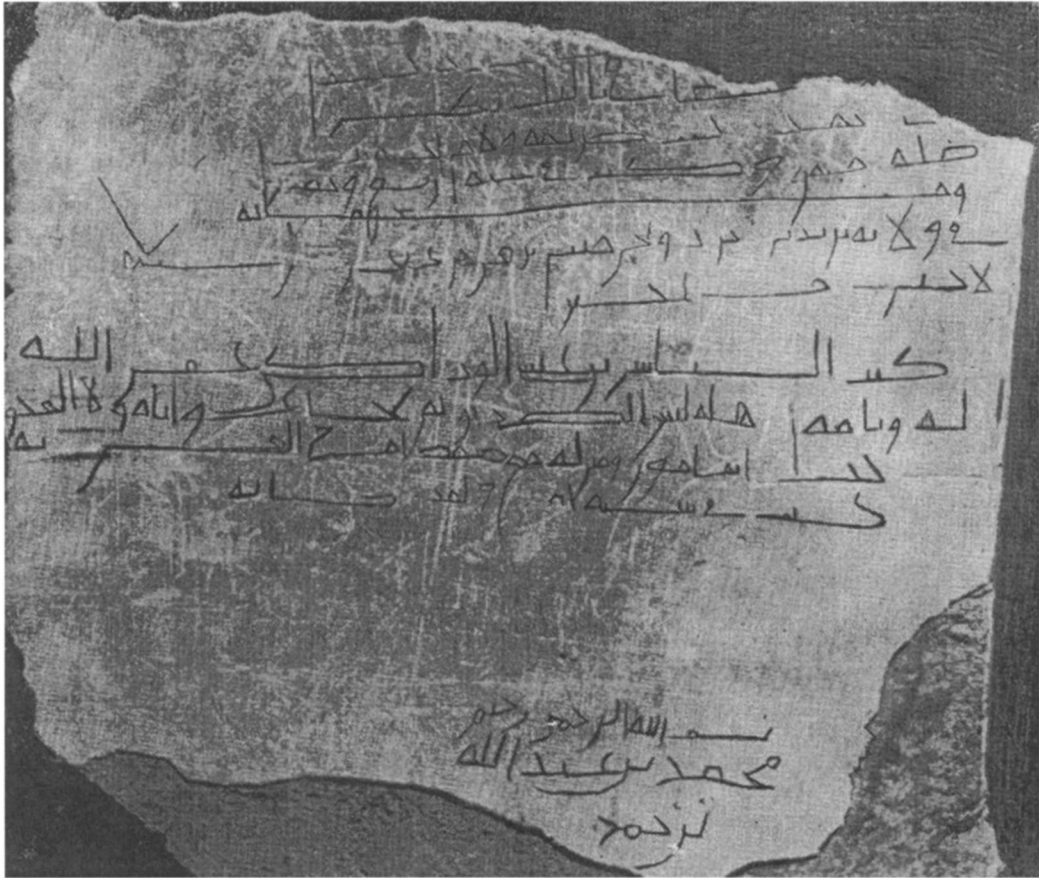
16 (A.16) Ereroyk' (after F. V. Shelov-Kovediaev, "Zametki po grecheskoi epigrafike Armenii," *IFZh* [1986] 1:60)



17 (A.17) Ejmiacin (after Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture*, 1: microfiche 8, B10)



18 (A.18) Zvart'noc' (after Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 1: fig. 30)



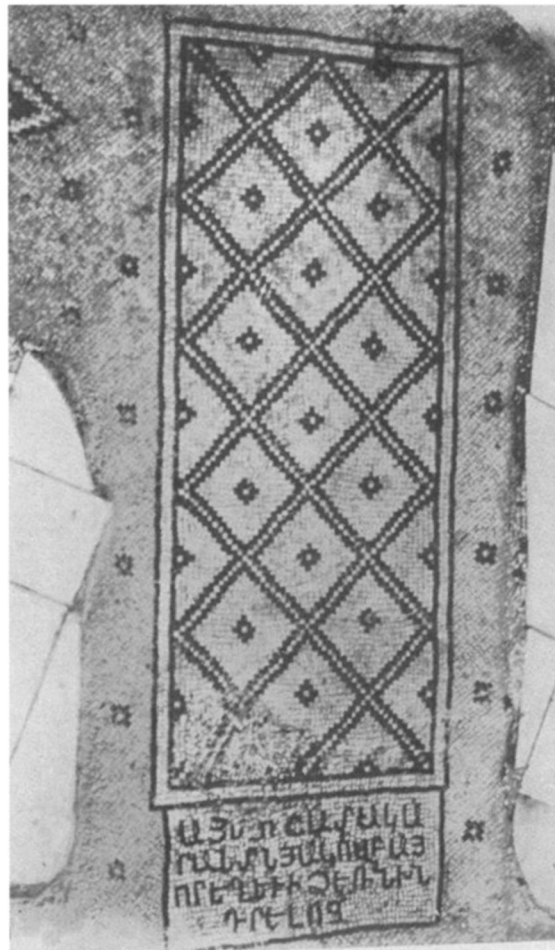
19 (A.19) Zvart'noc' (after A. A. Xaç'atryan, *Korpus Arabskikh nadpiesye Armeni VIII–XVI vv.* [Erevan, 1987], pl. iv and no. 6)



20 (B.1) Musrara (after Der Nersessian, *L'art arménien*, fig. 45)



21 (B.2) Mount of Olives/Šušannan (after E. Loukianoff, “Le Musée du couvent russe du mont des Oliviers à Jérusalem,” *BIE* 13 [1931]: pl. vii)



22 (B.3) Mount of Olives/Jacob (after Loukianoff, "Le Musée," pl. v.1)



23 (B.4) Mount of Olives/Vaḷan (after Yovsēp'ean, *Kʿartēz*, pl. 1 and no. 1)



24 (B.6) Musrara/Ewst'at (after G. Avni, "Jerusalem as Textbook," *Biblical Archaeological Review* 22.3 [May–June 1996]: 40)

by J. Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst der Armenier und Europa*, 2 vols. (Vienna, 1918), 1:33, fig. 34 and 85; also republished by Abrahamyan, *Hayoc' gir ev grč'ut'yun*, 79, and by Manuč'aryan, *K'nnut'yun Hayastani*, 59, 62.

- A. ԵՐԵՄՈՒՆ ԵՒ ԶՈՐՐՈ
- B. ԲԴ ԱՄԻ ԽՈՍՐ
- C. ՈՎԱՅ ԱՐՔԱԻ ԵՐԱՆԵԼԻ Տ
- D. ԷՐ ԲՈՒՏ ԱՌՈՒԵՂԵԱՆ ԶԳԵԱՅ ԶԶԻ
- E. ՄՈՒՆՍ ՍՈՒՐԲ ԵԿԵՂԵՅ[ԻՈՅՍ]
- F. ԵՐԵՍ
- G. ՈՒՆ ԵՒ ՈՒԹ ԱՄԻՈՅՆ ԿՈՐՈՒՄԻՆ | ԳՈԲԹԻ ԵՒ ԽՈՒՄԱԹ
- H. ԶԲՈՒՏ
- I. ԵՒ ՅԵՏ ԵՐԻՅ ԱՄԱՅ ՄԱՀՈՒԱ
- J. Ն ԲՏԻՆ ԿԱՏԱՐԵԱՅ ՍՈՒՐԲ ԵԿԵՂԵՅԻՍ Ա
- K. ՆՆԱՅ ԲՏԻՆ ԱՄՈՒՄԻՆ ՏՐ
- L. Է ԱՄՍԵԱՆ Ի Ք
- M. [—]
- N. [—]
- O. [Ի ՄԱ]Ր{Ծ}<Զ>ՊԱՆՈՒԹԵԱՆ ՎԱՐԱԶՏԻՐՈՅ
- P. Ի ՀԱՅՈՅ ԱՍՊԵՏԻ ՅԱՌԵՂԵ
- Q. ԱՆ ՏԵՐՈՒԹԵԱՆ ՎԱՀԱՆԱՅ Ի Հ
- R. ՈԳԱԲԱՐԶՈՒԹԵ
- S. [ԱՆ] [—]
- T. [—] ՅՐԿԱՆ
- U. ՈՐԴԻՈՅ ԵՒՍԵՐԿԱՅ ԿԱՄՍԱՐԱԿԱՆԻ ԱՇԱՆՈՒՇԱ
- V. Յ ԱՌՆ ԳՐԻԳՈՐԻ ՎԱՆԱՆԴԱՅՈՅ ԴՍՏԵՐՔ ԱՆՆԱՅ ԵՒ ՈՐԴԵԱ
- W. ԿՔ Գ[. . .]ՀԱՆ ՀՐԱՀԱ{Ի}Տ ԵՒ ՏԻԱՐԻԱՆԴ Դ{Ժ}<Շ>ԽՈՅ ՍԱՀԱԿԻ ՌԱՀԱՍԻ ՇՈՒՇԱՆ ՅԻՇԵՅԻ Ա(ՍՏՈՒԱ)Ծ
- X. ԵՒ ՈՂՈՐՄԵՅԻ

In the thirty-fourth year of king Xosrov, the blessed Lord But Arueteian set out the foundations of this holy church. In the thirty-eighth year Gobt'i and Xumat' killed But and three years after the death of But, Annay the wife of But completed this holy church in the month Trē, on day 20 [—] in the office of *marcpan* (= *marzpan*) of Varaztiroc' *aspet* of Armenia, in the lordship of Vahan Arieteian, in the (spiritual) oversight of [—] brother's son Ewserk. May God remember and have mercy on the daughters of Grigor Vanandac'i, the husband of Ašanuš Kamsarakan, Annay and the little children G[. . .]han, Hrahat and Tiarwand [and] Šušan, princess of Sahak Rāhasi

4. Ałaman: 5 October 636/4 October 637 (Fig. 4). Single-line inscription on fourth row of blocks below roof level, beginning on the west of southern façade, extending across southern apse, and continuing to northeastern face of eastern apse.

Copied and published by Ahišan, *Širak*, 125, whence republished by Kostaneanc', *Vimakan Taregir*, 1; copied and published by Orbeli, *Izbrannye trudy*, 395, 397, whence republished, with separate photographs, by Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 1:36–37, figs. 184 and 187; 2: fig. 602; also republished by Abrahamyan, *Hayoc' gir ev grč'ut'yun*, 85, and by Manuč'aryan, *K'nnut'yun Hayastani*, 89.

- A. [Ք]ՍԱՆ ԵՒ ԵԻԹՆԵՄԻՈՅ ՀԵՐԱԿՂԻ ԲԱՐԵՊԱՇՏ ԹԱԳԱԻՈՐԻ ՆԵՐՍԵՀԻ Շ
- B. ԻՐԱԿԱՅ ԵՒ ԱՇԱՐՈՒՆԵ
- C. ԱՅ ՏԵԱՌՆ ԵՒ ԹԵ
- D. ՈՓ

- E. ԻՂՈՍ[Ի ԱՇ]ԱՐՈՒՆ
 F. ԵԱՅ ԵՊԻՍԿՈՊՈՍ[Ի] ԵՍ ԳՐԻԳՈ
 G. Բ ԵՂՈՒՍՏՐ ԵՒ ՄԱՐԻԱՄ ԻՄ
 H. ԿԻՆ ՇԻՆԵՅԱՔ ԶՍՈ
 I. ԻՐՔ ԵԿ[Ե]ՂԵՅԻ
 J. Ս ՎԱՍՆ ՄԵՐ ՀՈԳԻՈՅ

In the twenty-seventh year of Heraclius pious king in the time of Nerseh lord of Širak and Ašarunik⁴ and of T'eop'itos bishop of Ašarunik⁵ I Grigor *etustr* and Mariam my wife we built this holy church for the sake of our souls

5. Bagavan: Begun 15 June 631 and completed August 639. Single-line inscription at unknown height, extending across southern, eastern, and perhaps northern façades.

Copied and published by Šahxat'uncanc⁶, *Storagrut'wn*, 2:591; copied by Ahišan, *Ayrarat*, 529, whence republished by Kostaneanc⁷, *Vimakan Taregir*, 1; copied and published by Orbeli, *Izbrannye trudy*, 386 and insert, whence republished by Abrahamyan, *Hayoc' gir ev grč'ut'yun*, 84, and by Manuč'aryan, *K'nnut'yun Hayastani*, 70.

- A. ՔՍԱՆ ԵՒ ՄԻ Ա[ՄԻ]{Յ}Ն Ա(ՍՏՈՒԱ)ԾԱՊԱՀ ԵՐԱԿՂԻ ԹԱԳԱՒՈՐԻ ՀՐ[Ո]ՏԻՅ ԱՄ[ՍՈ]ՅՆ
 [ՈՐ Ա]ԻՐ ԵՐԵՍՈՒՆ ԷՐ ԵՍ [—] [ԱՅ] [—] ՎԱՆԱՅ ԵՐԷՅ ՀԱՃՈՑԻԻՔՆ Ա(ՍՏՈՒԾՈ)Յ
 B. ՀԻՄՆ ԱՐԿԻ ՄՐԲԱ
 C. Յ ԵԿԵՂԵՅԻՈՅՍ ԵՒ Ի [Ք]ՍԱ
 D. [Ն ԵՒ ԻՆՆԵ]ՐՈՐԳ ԱՄԻ Ն
 E. ՈՅՆ ԵՐԱԿՂԻ ԹԱԳԱ
 F. ԻՈՐԻ ՅԱՄՍԵԱՆ ՆԱԻԱՍԱՐԳԻՈՐ ՈՐ ԱԻՐ [—] [ՅԱԻՈ]
 G. ԻՐՆ ՈՒՐԲԱԹ ԵՂԵԻ ԿԱՏԱՐՈՒՄՆ ՆՈՅՆ ԳՈՐԾ
 H. ՈՅՍ ՏԵՂԻՈՅՍ ՎԶԵՆ[ԱԿԱԻ] ԿԱՍՆԱ ԱՄԵՆԱՅՆ ԻՐԱԻՔ
 I. ՎԱՐԴԱՊԵՏՈՒԹԵ
 J. ԱՄԲ ԻՍՐԱՅԷՂԻ ԳՈՐԻ
 K. ԱՂ[Ճ]ԵՅԻՈՅ

In the twenty-first year of king Heraclius protected by God, in the month Hrotic⁸ which was day thirty, I . . . elder of the community through the grace of God made a foundation of this holy church and in the [twenty-nin]th year of the same king Heraclius in the month Nawasard, which was day [—] the day Friday, there was a completion of this same project of this site through the expense, through the will, and in every matter, through the instruction of Israyēṭ Gorāṭcec⁹

6. Avan: Between 630 and 640 (Fig. 6). Carved on three blocks which were originally positioned on eastern elevation, at an unknown height.

K. Łafadaryan, *Erevan. Miġnadaryan hušarjannerē ev vimakan arjanagrut'yunnerē* (Erevan, 1975), no. 194 and pl. 139, whence republished by V. L. Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture*, 7 vols. (Zug, 1980–90), 7: microfilm 159, A6.

1. Տ(Է)Ր ԵԶՐ ԶՈՒԿԶ ԿԱԹՈՂԻԿՈՍ ՃՇՄԱ
 2. ԲԻՏ ծ{ω}<ου>λoς τῷ Θεῷ ՍԱՄ<ՈՒ>ԷՂ ՇՈԱ
 3. ՌԼ Ք(ՐԻՍՏՈՍԻ)

Lord Ezr kat'olikos of Armenia true servant of God Samuēṭ servant of Christ

Note that ԶՈՒԿԶ represents ՀԱՅՈՅ and ՇՈԱՌԼ represents ԾԱՐԱՅ. The cryptogram is mathematical. Each of the original thirty-six letters has a numerical value. Those letters which represent nu-

merals 1 to 9 have been exchanged for those representing 1,000 to 9,000, and those representing 10 to 90 have been replaced with those representing 100 to 900.

7. Mren: After January 638 and before 11 February 641 (Fig. 7). Three-line inscription, carved onto a single row of blocks, located immediately below roof level, on western façade.

Copied and published by Ahišan, *Ayrarat*, 114, whence republished by Kostaneanc', *Vimakan Taregir*, 2; photographed and published by Yovsēp'ean, *K'artēz*, no. 6 and pl. 3; published by Orbeli, *Izbrannye trudy*, 397, 401, whence republished, with Yovsēp'ean's photograph, by Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 1:41, 43, and fig. 38; also republished, with new, partial photograph by N. and J.-M. Thierry, "La cathédrale de Mren et sa décoration," *CahArch* 21 (1971): 44–45 and figs. 1 and 2; also republished by Manuč'aryan, *K'nnut'yun Hayastani*, 64; separate, partial photograph published by P. Cu-neo, *Architettura Armena dal quarto al diciannovesimo secolo*, 2 vols. (Rome, 1988), 2:815.

1. [—] ՈՐԴԻ ՀԵՐԱԿՂԻ ԲԱՐԵՑԱՂԹՈՂ ԹԱԳԱՒՈՐԻ ՅԻՇԽԱՆՈՒԹԵ[ԱՆ] [—] [Ա]ՄԵՆԱԳՈՎ ՊԱՏՐԿԻ ԿՈՒՐԱՊԱՂԱ[Տ]Ի [Ե]Ի ՍՊԱՐԱ[ՊԵ]
2. [ՏԻ ՀԱՅ]ՈՅ ԵՒ ԱՍՈՐԻՈՅ ԵՒ ՅԵՊԻՍԿՈՊՈՍՈՒԹԵԱՆ[.] ՍՐ[.]Ս. [—] [ԹԵ]ՈՎՓԻՂՈՍԻ ԵՒ Ի ՏԱՆՈՒՏԵՐՈՒԹԵԱՆ ՆԵՐՍԵ[ՀԻ]
3. [ՇԻՐԱ]ԿԱՅ ԵՒ ԱՇԱՐՈՒՆԵԱՅ ՏԵԱՌՆ ՇԻՆԵՑԱԻ ՍՈՒՐԲ ԵԿԵՂԵՑ[ԻՍ Ի ԲԱՐԵԽԱԻՍ]ՈՒԹԻՆ ԿԱՄՍԱՐԱԿԱՆԵԱՅ ԵՒ ՄՐԵՆՈՅ ԵՒ ԱՍԵՐ[. . .]

[—] of the victorious king Heraclius, in the office of prince [—] of the all-praiseworthy *patrik*, *kourapatat*, and *sparapet* [of Armenia] and Syria and in the office of bishop of [—] [T'e]ovp'itos and in the office of *tanutēr* of Nerseh lord of [Šira]k and Ašarunik', this holy church was built [for the intercession] of the Kamsarakank' and Mren and Aser [. . .]

8. Naxčavan: Between 630 and 650 (?). Incomplete single-line inscription, perhaps on fourth row of blocks below roof level, extending across northern and perhaps western elevations.

Copied and published by N. Sargisean, *Tətagrut'iwunk' P'okr ew i Mec Hays* (Venice, 1864), 215, whence republished by Ahišan, *Širak*, 136; copied and published by Orbeli, *Izbrannye trudy*, 431, whence republished by Manuč'aryan, *K'nnut'yun Hayastani*, 90; single, poor photograph published by Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 1: fig. 36

- A. [—]Ս
- B. ՏՈՐԵԱՅ
- C. ՅՍ ՈՎ ՍՏ
- D. ԵՓԱՆՈ
- E. Ս ՅԱ
- F. ՌԱԶԱՌԱ
- G. ՔԵԱԼ ԵԻ
- H. ՆԱԽԱ
- I. ՄԱՐՏԻ[ՐՈ]
- J. ՍՆ ՈՐՈՅ
- K. ԶԱՅՍ ՎԿ
- L. ԱՅԱ[Ր]Ա
- M. Ն ՅԱՐԴԱ
- N. ՐԵԱՅ Ք[Ե]
- O. Զ ԳՐԻԳՈՐ
- P. Ի ԾՆ
- Q. ԱԻՂ Ն

R. ԵՐՍԵՆԻ ՊԱՏ

S. ԲԿԻ ՇԻՐ

T. ԱԿԱ

U. Յ [Ե]Ի [—]

[—] ՍՏՈՐԵԱՅՅՍ ՈՎ ՍՏԵՓԱՆՈՍ ՅԱՌԱՋԱՌԱՔԵԱԼ ԵՒ ՆԱԽԱՄԱՐՏԻ[ՐՈ]ՍՆ ՈՐՈՅ ԶԱՅՍ
ՎԿԱՅԱ[Ր]ԱՆ ՅԱՐԴԱՐԵԱՅ Ք[Ե]Զ ԳՐԻԳՈՐԻ ԾՆԱԻՂ ՆԵՐՍԵՆԻ ՊԱՏՐԿԻ ՇԻՐԱԿԱՅ [Ե]Ի [—]

[—] worldly ones, O Step'anos apostle and protomartyr, you for whom the parent of Grigor adorned this martyrium, in the time of Nerseh *patrik* of Širak and [—]

9. Zvart'noc': After 644 and before 660 (Fig. 9). Located on sundial, unearthed in course of excavation.

Photograph published by Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 1: fig. 31; photographed and published by T'. T'oramanyan, *Haykakan čartarapetut'yun* (Erevan, 1942), 254, whence republished by Abrahamyan, *Hayoc' gir ev grč'ut'yun*, 85; separate photograph published by Cuneo, *Architettura Armena*, 2:812.

Ա[Ղ]ԱԻԹԵ[Ս] | ՅԵՆ Ա[Ռ Տ](Է)Ր Ա[Մ]ԵՆ | ԱՅՆ ՍՈՒ[ՐԲ] Ի ԺԱՄ | ԸՆԴՈՒՆԵԼԻ
Ա Բ Գ Դ Ե Զ Է Ը Թ Փ ԺԱ ՓԲ

May they pray to the Lord all-holy the one who in time receives
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

10.1 Mastara: Mid-640s (Fig. 10.1). Carved onto single block positioned directly above window over entrance into southern apse; extends onto window frame.

Copied and published by Šahxat'uncanc', *Storagručiwn*, 2:46, whence republished by Kostaneanc', *Vimakan Taregir*, 3; photographed and published by Yovsēp'ean, *K'artēz*, no. 7 and pl. 4, whence translated, but not republished, by Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 1:44 and fig. 39; also republished, without photograph, by Manuč'aryan, *K'nnut'yun Hayastani*, 53, and with photograph by Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture*, 7: microfiche 159, C5; separate photograph published by Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture*, 1: microfiche 35, C4.

1. ՅԱՄՍ Տ(ԵԱՌ)Ն ԹԵՈԴՈՐՈՍ[Ի]
2. ԳՆՈՒՆԵԱՅ ԵՊԻՍԿ[Ա]<Ո>ՊՈՍԻ
3. ՇԻՆԵՅԱԻ Ա(ՍՏՈՒԱ)Ծ[ԱՅԻ]Ն ՏՈՒՆՍ
4. ՔԱԻԵԼ ԶԳՐԻԳՈՐԱՍ ԱՆ
5. ԱՐԺԱՆ
6. [Ք](ՐԻՍՏՈ)Ս Ա(ՍՏՈՒԱ)Ծ ԳԹԱ Ի ԳՐԻԳՈՐԱՍ ՄԵՂԱԻՈՐ ԵՒ ԻՆԶ ԿԵՓ[. . .]
7. ԵԻ [—]

In the years of Lord T'edoros bishop of Gnunik' this holy house was built to expiate the unworthy Grigorias. Christ God, be compassionate to Grigorias sinner and to me Kep'[. . .] and [—]

10.2 Mastara: Mid-640s (Fig. 10.2). Located in upper register of southern section of western elevation, above level of window; however, lines 6 and 8 are carved onto southern face of western apse, perpendicular to the other surface.

Copied and published by Šahxat'uncanc', *Storagručiwn*, 2:47; copied and published by Ahišan, *Ayrarat*, 135, whence republished by Kostaneanc', *Vimakan Taregir*, 3; photographed and published by Yovsēp'ean, *K'artēz*, no. 8 and pl. 5, whence republished, without photograph, by Manuč'aryan, *K'nnut'yun Hayastani*, 54, whence republished, with photograph, by Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture*,

7: microfiche 159, C6–7; separate photographs published by Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture*, 1: microfiche 36, B3–5; additional photograph published by Cuneo, *Architettura Armena*, 2:814; photographed and published by Stone, Kouymjian, and Lehmann, *Album*, 113 and Inscription 2.

1. + ԳՈՀԱՆԱՄ ԶԱ(ՍՏՈՒԾՈ)Յ ՈՐ ԵՏ ԻՆՁ ԳՐԷ
2. ԳՈՐԱՍԱՅ ՍԻԻՆԻՍԻ ԵՒ ԸՂԶԱՅԵ
3. ԼՈՅ ՈՐԴԻՈՅ ԵՂԲԱԻՐ ԳՐԻԳՈՐԻ
4. ՇԻՆԵԼ ԶՏԱՃ[ԱՐ Փ]ԱՌԱՅ ԵՒ ՍՈՎԱԻ
5. ԱՐԱ[Ր] ԶԻՍ [. .] [ԵՊ]ԻՍԿՈՊՈՍ ԱՊԱՀՈՒՆԵԱ[Յ]
6. ՍԱ Է ԱՊԱԻ[ԷՆ Մ]ԱԶԴԱ[Ր]
7. ԱԻ ԱՂԱԻԹԱՐԱՆ ԱՐԴԱՐՈՅ ՔԱԻԱՐԱՆ
8. ՄԵՂԱԻՈՐԱՅ ՅԻՇԱՏ
9. ԱԿԱՐԱՆ ԻՆՁ ԵՒ ԻՍՊ[Յ] ԵՒ ՈՐՔ ԱՂԱԻԹ
10. Է[Ք Զ]ՄԵԶ ՅԻՇԵՑԷՔ

I thank God who permitted me Grēgoras Siwni and beloved nephew Grigor to build a house of glory and through this made me . . . bishop of Apahunik'. This is a refuge for Mazdara (= Mastara), a place of prayer for the faithful, a place of expiation for sinners, a memorial for me and for mine. And you who pray, remember us

10.3 Mastara: Mid-640s (Fig. 10.3). Located on two unequal blocks above the window which is itself positioned above entrance of western apse.

Copied and published by Ališan, *Ayrarat*, 135, whence republished by Manuč'aryan, *K'nnut'yun Hayastani*, 54, whence republished with separate photograph, by Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture*, 7: microfiche 159, C8; additional photographs also published by Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture*, 1: microfiche 36, B7–10 and C1–2.

1. Ա(ՍՏՈՒԾՈ)Յ ԱՃՈՂԵԼ
2. ՈՎ ԳՐԻԳՈ
3. ՐԱՍԱ<Յ> ՎԱՆ
4. ԱԿԱՆԻ ՇԻՆ
5. ԵՑԱԻ ԱՊԱԻ
6. ԷՆ ՄԱԶԴԱՐԱԻ
7. ԱՅՍ ԿԱԹՈՂԻԿԷ ՀԱՐՄՆ ԽԱԶ
8. [ԱՆ]ՇԱՆ ԹԱԳԱԻ ՊՍԱԿԵԱԼ ՈՒՆԻ
9. Փ[Ե]ՍԱՅ ԶՔ(ՐԻՍՏՈ)Ս ՓԵՍԱԻԷՐ ԶԱՌԱՔԵԱԼՍ
10. ՄԱՐԳԱՐԷՍ ԶՎԿԱՅՍ ՍԱ ԲԱՐԵՇԷ
11. Ն ՈՒՆԻ ԶՄԱԶԴԱՐԱ ԵՒ ՓՐԿԷ ԶԳՐ[ԻԳՈՐԱՍ]

Through the favoring by God of Grigoras monk, this cathedral was built as a refuge for Mazdara (= Mastara). The bride crowned with a cross-shaped crown has as a bridegroom Christ and as the companion of the bridegroom, this Apostle, this Prophet, this martyr, this one keeps Mazdara prosperous and redeems Grigoras

10.4 Mastara: On the basis of a mid-640s date, this equates to 30 November (Fig. 10.4). Located on western section of southern elevation.

Copied and published by Ališan, *Ayrarat*, 136, whence republished, without photograph, by Manuč'aryan, *K'nnut'yun Hayastani*, 54, whence republished, with photograph, by Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture*, 7: microfiche 159, C9.

1. ԱՐԱՅ ԱՄՍՈՅ ԺԳ Ի
2. ՆԱԻԱԿԱՏԻՔ ՍՐԲՈ
3. Յ ԵԿԵՂԵՑՈՅՍ [.]
4. ԵՒ ՅԻՇԱՏԱԿ ԵՊԻՍԿՈՊՈՍԻ [—]

Of the month Arac' [day] 14 at the consecration of this holy church and to the memory of bishop [—]

11. Aruč: 24 March 670 (Fig. 11). Panel located on exterior of eastern apse, beneath central window.

Copied and published by Mxit'ar Vardapet, "Mi k'ani arjanagrut'iwnner," *Handēs Hayagitut'iwn* 3.2 (1903): 1, whence republished by Kostaneanc', *Vimakan Taregir*, 2; copied and published by Yovsēp'ean, *K'artēz*, no. 9 and pl. 6, whence republished by Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 1: fig. 40; copied and published by Orbeli, *Izbrannye trudy*, 402, with separate drawing at 421, whence republished by Abrahamyan, *Hayoc' gir ev grč'ut'yun*, 86, and by Manuč'aryan, *K'nnut'yun Hayastani*, 100; photographed and published by Stone, Kouymjian, and Lehmann, *Album*, 114 and Inscription 3.

1. Ի ԵՒ Թ ԱՄԻ ԿՈՍՏԱՆՏՆԻ ՄԱՐԵ
2. ՐԻ ԱՄՍՈՅ ՈՐ ԱԻ[Ր] Ժ ԵՒ Ե ՀԻՄՆ
3. ԱՐԿԵՅԱԻ ՍՈՒՐԲ ԿԱԹՈՂԻԿԵՍ
4. Ի ԶԵՌՆ ԳՐԻԳՈՐԻ ՄԱՄԻԿՈՆԵՆԻ
5. ՀԱՅ[Ի]ՈՅ ԻՇԽԱՆԻ ԵՒ ՀԵՂԻՆԷ
6. Ի ՆՈՐԻՆ ԶՈՒԳԱԿԸՅԻ
7. Ի ԲԱՐԵԽԱԻ ՍՈՒԹԻԻՆ ՇԻՆԱԻ
8. ՂԱՅ ԶՍԱ

In the 29th year of Constans in the month Mareri which was day 15 this holy cathedral was founded by means of Grigor Mamikonean prince of Armenia and Helinē the spouse of the same for the intercession of the builders this

12. T'alín: before 695 (Fig. 12). Four-line inscription, located on a single row of blocks, at roof level.

Copied and published by Šahxat'uncanc', *Storagrut'iwn*, 2:50; copied and published by Ahišan, *Ayrarat*, 138, whence republished by Kostaneanc', *Vimakan Taregir*, 2; photographed and published by Yovsēp'ean, *K'artēz*, no. 5 and pl. 1; photographed, drawn, and published by Orbeli, *Izbrannye trudy*, 434 and pl. LVIII, whence republished by Abrahamyan, *Hayoc' gir ev grč'ut'yun*, 86, and by Manuč'aryan, *K'nnut'yun Hayastani*, 87; separate photograph published by Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture*, 1: microfiche 64, D8.

1. ԿԵՍ ՆԵՐՍԵՆ ԱՊՈՀԻՊԱՏ ՊԱ[ՏՐԻԿ ՇԻ]ՐԱԿԱՅ ԵՒ ԱՇԱՐՈՒՆԵԱՅ ՏԷՐ ՇԻ
2. ՆԵՅԻ ԶԵԿԵՂԵՅԻՍ ՅԱՆՈՒՆ ՍՐԲ[Ո]Յ Ա(ՍՏՈՒԱ)ԾԱԾՆԻՆ Ի ԲԱՐԵԽԱԻ ՍՈՒ
3. ԹԻԻՆ ԻՆՁ ԵՒ ՇՈՒՇԱՆԱՅ ԱՄՈՒՍՆՈՅ ԻՄՈՅ ԵՒ
4. ՀՐԱՀԱՏԱՅ ՈՐԴԻՈՅ ՄԵՐՈՅ+

I Nerseh *apohipat pa[trik]* lord of [Ši]rak and Ašarunik' built this church in the name of the Holy Mother of God for the intercession of me and Šušān my wife and Hrahat our son

13. Naxčavan/Noramanuk: Between ca. 725 and ca. 760 (Fig. 13). Carved onto a tombstone, once located in an underground crypt, now destroyed.

Copied and published by Ahišan, *Širak*, 136, whence republished by Kostaneanc', *Vimakan Taregir*, 3; photographed and published by Yovsēp'ean, *K'artēz*, no. 10 and pl. 5; copied, drawn, and pub-

lished, with enhanced photograph, by Orbeli, *Izbrannyye trudy*, 411 and pl. LVI.1, whence republished by Abrahamyan, *Hayoc' gir ev grč'ut'yun*, 86–87, and by Manuč'aryan, *K'nnut'yun Hayastani*, 104.

1. Ա(ՍՏՈՒԱ)ԵԱՀՐԱՄԱՆ ԵԼԻԻԲ[Ք] ԵՒ Ք(ՐԻՍՏՈ)ՍԱԿՈԶ ՀՐԱԺԱՐ{ՄԱՆ}
2. ՄԱՄԲ Ի ՍՄԱ Է ՀԱՆԳՈՒՅԵԱԼ ԸՆԴ ՀԱՐՍ ԻԻՐ
3. ԵՐԱՆԵԼԻ Տ(Է)Ր ԱՐՏԱԻԱԶԴ ԿԱՄ<Ս>ԱՐԱԿ<Ա>Ն ԱՊԱՀԻԻՊԱՏ
4. ՊԱՏՐԻԿ ԵՒ ԻՇԽԱՆ Հ[Ա.]ՅՈՅ ՈՐԴԻ ՀՐԱՀԱՏԱ
5. ՊԱՏՐԿԻ ՇԻՐԱԿԱՅ ԵՒ ԱՇԱՐՈՒՆԵԱՅ Տ(ԵԱՌ)Ն ԵՒ ԱՄՈՒՍԻՆ
6. ՇՈՒՇԱՆԱՅ ՄԱՄԻԿՈՆԵՆԻ

With an exit commanded by God and a departure called by Christ the blessed Lord Artavazd Kam-sarakan *apahiwpat patrik* and prince of Armenia, son of Hrahat *patrik* lord of Širak and Ašarunik', and husband of Šušan Mamikonean was buried in this with his fathers

14. T'alín/Uxtaytur: 15 May 783/14 May 784 (Fig. 14). Located on two blocks forming part of the southwestern pier, interior.

Copied and published by Ačišan, *Ayrarat*, 139, whence republished by Kostaneanc', *Vimakan Taregir*, 2; photographed and published by Yovsēp'ean, *K'artēz*, no. 11 and pl. 7, whence republished by Abrahamyan, *Hayoc' gir ev grč'ut'yun*, 87; separate photograph published by Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture*, 1: microfiche 70, C2; photographed and published by Stone, Kouymjian, and Lehmann, *Album*, 115 and Inscription 4.

1. ՄԼԲ ԹՈՒԱԿԱՆՈՒԹԵԱՆ ՀԱ[Յ]
2. ՈՅ ԵՍ ՈՒԽՏԱՅՏՈՒՐ ՎԱՆԱ
3. Կ[Ա.]ՆՍ ԵՒ ՏՈՒՏԻ ԵՂԲԱՅՐ ԻՄ ԲԵ[Ր]
4. Ա[Ք Զ]ԱՂԲԻԻՐԱՆԻՍ Ի ՔԱՐԿԱՊ[.]
5. ՆՈՒԻ ԱՏԵՆ Ի ԹԱԼԻՆ ԹԵ ՅԻՂԵ[.]
6. [.]ԱՅ ՈՔ ԽԼԵ ԻՄ ՄԵՂԱՅՍ [ՊԱՐ]
7. ՏԱԿԱՆ ԵՂԻՅԻ

232 of the Armenian era, I Uxtaytur monk and Tuti my brother we brought a water source from K'arkap[.] . . . to T'alín. If anyone from ? destroys, may he be liable for my sins

Inscriptions in Greek

15. Mastara: 480 or undated. Carved onto a single block located on exterior wall.

Copied and published by Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 1:31 and fig. 33, whence republished in Manuč'aryan, *K'nnut'yun Hayastani*, 56–58; republished with new suggested reading by F. V. Shelov-Kovediaev, “Zametki po grecheskoi epigrafike Armenii,” *IFZh* (1986) 1:66–68.

ΠΕΡΟΖ | [.]ONTAK

Περοζ | [ǽρ]χοντ(α) ακ' or Περόζ[ης] | [Λε]οντάκ[ης]

21 of king Peroz or Peroz Leontak

16. Ereroyk': Undated (Fig. 16). Carved onto a single block located on eastern side of southern façade.

Copied and published by Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 1:31 and fig. 32, whence republished by A. Khatchatrian, *L'architecture arménienne du IV^e au VI^e siècle* (Paris, 1971), 45; photographed and published by Shelov-Kovediaev, “Zametki,” 59–65.

1. + ΤΩ ΟΙΚΩ ΟΥ

2. ΠΡΕΠΙ ΑΓΙΑC

3. ΜΑ ΚΕ ΕΙC ΜΑΚ

4. ΡΟΤΗΤΑ Η

5. ΜΕΡ{Ε}ΩΝ +

+ τῷ οἴκῳ σου | πρέπ<ε>ι ἁγίας | μα Κ(ύρι)ε εἰς μακ | ρότητα ἡ | μερ{ε}ῶν +

Holiness befits your house, O Lord, for evermore (Ps. 92 [93]: 5)

17. Ejmiacin: Undated (Fig. 17) Carved onto single block on northern façade; (a) and (b) flank a circular medallion; beneath the medallion, a *tabula ansata* engraved with (c); (d) inscribed around circumference of medallion, with additional invocation split between the bars of a cross, itself cut in relief; two doves perched on the medallion, facing each other.

Copied and published by Khatchatrian, *L'architecture arménienne*, 67, whence republished, with new suggested reading, by Shelov-Kovediaev, "Zametki," 68–69; separate photograph published by Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture*, 1: microfiche 8, B10.

(a) ΚΥΡΙ(Ε) | ΕΛΕΗCΟΝ | ΤΟΝ ΔΟΥΛΟΝ | ΟΥ ΑΡΧΙΑΝ

(b) Κ(ΑΙ) | ΚΥ(ΡΙΕ) ΕΛΕ(ΗCΟΝ) | ΕΛΠΙΔΙΝ

(c) ΔΑΝΙΗΛ | ΤΙΡΕΡ | ΓΑΡΙΚΙΝΙC

(d) ΒΟΗΘΙ ΠΑΝΤΑC ΤΟΥC ΕΥΧΟΜΕΝΟΥC ΕΝ ΤΗ ΕΚΛΗ(CΙΑ) Ι{Ε}ΗCΟΥ | ΖΙΒΙΘΑΙΝ

(a) Κύρι(ε) | ἐλέησον | τὸν δοῦλόν | σου Ἀρχίαν

(b) κ(αὶ) | Κύ(ριε) ἐλέ(ησον) | Ἔλπιδιν

(c) Δανιήλ | Τίρερ | Γαρικίνις

(d) Βοήθι πάντας τοὺς εὐχομένους ἐν τῇ ἐκκλη(σίᾳ) Ἰ{ε}ησοῦ Ζιβιθαῖν

(a) Lord, have mercy upon your servant Arkian

(b) And Lord have mercy upon Elpis

(c) Daniel Tirer Garikinis

(d) Help all those who pray in the church Zibithain of Jesus

18. Zvart'noc': After 644 and before 660 (Fig. 18). Found on eastern side of exterior wall.

Photographed and published by Strzygowski, *Die Baukunst*, 1: fig. 30; photographed and published by S. Kh. Mnatsakanian, *Zvartnots i odnotipiye pamiatniki* (Erevan, 1971), 11, no. 1 and pl. 1, whence republished by Shelov-Kovediaev, "Zametki," 69–70.

ΝΑΡCΗC ΕΠΟΙΗCΕΝ | ΜΝΗΜΟΝΕΥCΑΤΕ

Ναρσῆς ἐποίησεν | μνημονεύσατε

Narsēs made. Remember

Inscriptions in Arabic

I am very grateful to Dr. Robert Hoyland for studying these inscriptions and supplying his own readings and translations. These differ substantially from those provided by Xaç'atryan. These fragments represent those readings which Hoyland considers secure; those which he considered unclear have been excluded.

19. Zvart'noc': 24 December 770–12 December 771 (Fig. 19). Located on plaster surface of a column, interior.

A. A. Xač'atryan, *Korpus Arabskikh nadpisesye Armeni VIII–XVI vv.* (Erevan, 1987), no. 6 and pl. iv.

[—]
[—]
[—]
[—] و كتب في سنة اربع
و خمسين و مائة
...في ولاية يزيد بن جرد بجر يس (?)
بن مريم (?) [—]
[—]
كتب الياس [—] الوداكي غفر الله
له و [—] اهله [—]
[—]
[—]
[—] القرية
كتب في سنة [—]
بسم الله الرحمن [ال] رحيم
محمد بن عبد الله بن حمد

1. [—] | [—] | [—] | and he wrote in the year four | and fifty and one hundred | . . . in the governorship of Yazīd b. Jarad and Bgr ys (?) | b. Mariam (?) [—] | [—]

2. Ilyās b. ʿĪsā al-Waddāki wrote | [—] May Allah pardon | him and the entirety of his family and his house [—] | [—] and the village | He wrote in the year [—] |

3. In the name of Allah the beneficent the merciful | Muḥammad b. Abdullāh b. Ḥamad

20. Aruč: 3 July 786–21 June 787. Located on northern elevation, exterior.

Xač'atryan, *Korpus*, no. 4 and pl. II.

كتب الحسين بن محمد بن
عيسى القلساني (?)
سنة سبعين و مائة
[—]

al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad b. | ʿĪsā al-Qalsānī wrote | [in] the year seventy and one hundred | [—]

B. ARMENIAN MOSAIC INSCRIPTIONS FROM JERUSALEM

1. Musrara/Bird Mosaic: Sixth century? (Fig. 20). Located 350 m north of the Damascus Gate; found in a rectangular room with an apse at the east end.

Photographed and published by F. J. Bliss and A. C. Dickie, *Excavations at Jerusalem 1894–1897* (London, 1898), 253–59; republished, with full bibliography, by M. Avi-Yonah, “Mosaic Pavements in Palestine,” *QDAP* 2 (1932): 171–72 and no. 132; separate photographs published by Der Nersessian, *L'art arménien*, figs. 44 and 45; photographed and published, with full bibliography, by M. E. Stone, “A Reassessment of the Bird and Eustathius Mosaics,” in M. E. Stone, R. R. Ervine, and N. Stone, eds., *The Armenians in Jerusalem and the Holy Land*, Hebrew University Armenian Studies 4 (Leuven, 2002), 203–19 and fig. 9.

1. ՎԱՍՆ ՅԻՇԱՏԱԿԻ ԵՒ ՓՐԿՈՒԹԵԱՆ
2. ԱՄԵՆԱՅՆ ՀԱՅՈՑ ԶՈՐՈՑ ԶԱՆՈՒԱՆՍ Տ(Է)Ր ԳԻՏԷ

For the memory and salvation of all Armenians whose names the Lord knows

2. Mount of Olives/Šušannan: Sixth century? (Fig. 21). Located on a pavement in the hall of the Russian Museum on the Mount of Olives.

Photographed and published by H. Vincent and F. M. Abel, *Jérusalem. Recherches de topographie, d'archéologie et d'histoire*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1926), 2: pl. XLIII; photographed and published by E. Loukianoff, "Le Musée du couvent russe du mont des Oliviers à Jérusalem," *BIE* 13 (1931): 100–101 and pl. VII; republished by Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements," 168 and no. 118.

ԱՅՍ ԴԻ Է ԵՐԱՆԵԼԻՈՒՅ՝ ՀՈՒՇԱՆԱՆ ՄԱԻՐ ԱՐՏԱՒԱՆԱՅ ՀՈՌԻ ԺԸ

This is the body of Šušannan, mother of Artawan Horī 18

3. Mount of Olives/Yakob: Sixth century? (Fig. 22). Located in a chapel north of the Russian church on the Mount of Olives.

Photographed and published by Loukianoff, "Le Musée," 100 and pl. v.1, whence republished, with full bibliography, by Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements," 167 and no. 117; separate photograph published by Stone, "Bird and Eustathius Mosaics," fig. 6.

1. **ԱՅՍ ՅԻՇԱՏԱԿԱ**
2. **ՐԱՆ Տ(ԵԱՌ)Ն ՅԱԿՈՎԱՅ**
3. **ՈՐ ԵՂԵԻ Ի ԶԵՌՆ ԽՆ**
4. **ԴՐԵԼՈՅ**

This is the memorial of Lord Yakob which came into being by means of his request

4. Mount of Olives/Vařan: Sixth century? (Fig. 23). Located in a vaulted underground tomb in a chapel north of the Russian church on the Mount of Olives.

Photographed and published by Yovsēp'ean, *K'artēz*, no. 1 and pl. 1; photographed and published by Loukianoff, "Le Musée," 100 and pl. v.2 (revealing subsequent damage); republished, with full bibliography, by Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements," 168 and no. 119.

1. **ԲԱՐԵԹԱԻՍ ՈՒՆԵԼՈՎ**
2. **ՍՈՒ Ա(ՍՏՈՒԱ)Ծ ԶՍՈՒՐԲ Ե**
3. **ՍԱՅԻ ԵԻ ԶԵՐԱՆԵԼԻ**
4. **ՀԱՐՍՍ ԵՍ ՎԱՂԱՆ Ա**
5. **ՐԱՐԻ ՎԱՍՆ ԹՈՂՈՒ**
6. **ԹԵԱՆ ՄԵՂԱՅ ԶՅԻ**
7. **ՇԱՏԱԿԱՐԱՆՍ ԶԱՅՍ**

Through having as intercessor before God the holy Isaiah and these blessed fathers I Vařan made for the sake of remission of sins this memorial

5. Mount of Olives/T'ewah: Fifth or sixth century. Located between the gate and the Russian house on the Mount of Olives.

C. Clermont-Ganneau, trans. A. Stewart, *Archaeological Researches in Palestine during the Years 1873–1874*, 2 vols. (London, 1899) 1:329 and pl., whence republished by Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements," 169 and no. 120.

1. ՎԱՍՆ ԱՂԱԻԹԻՅ ԵՒ ՓՐ
2. ԿՈՒԹԵԱՆ ԹԵՒԱՀ Ա
3. ԲԱՍՈՎ ԵՒ ՄՈՒՐԿԱՆ

For the prayers and salvation of T'ewah, Abasov, and Murkan

6. Musrara/Ewstat/Eustathius: After 638 (Fig. 24). Located north of Damascus Gate, in side room of a church, within 100 m of Bird Mosaic (B.1).

D. Amit and S. Wolff, "Excavations on an Early Armenian Monastery in the Morasha Neighborhood of Jerusalem," *Qadmoniot* 26.1–2 (1993): 54; G. Avni, "Jerusalem as Textbook," *Biblical Archaeological Review* 22.3 (May–June 1996): 40, 42–43; D. Amit and S. Wolff, "An Armenian Monastery in the Morasha Neighborhood of Jerusalem," in *Ancient Jerusalem Revealed*, ed. H. Geva (Jerusalem, 1994), 293–98; M. E. Stone, "The New Armenian Inscriptions from Jerusalem," in *Armenian Perspectives*, ed. N. Awde (Richmond, 1997), 263–68; photograph republished in Stone, "Bird and Eustathius Mosaics," fig. 7.

1. ԵՍ
2. ԵՒՍՏԱԹ ԵՐԷՅ Ա
3. ՐԿԻ ԶՅԱԻՃԱՊԱԿՍ
4. ՈՐ ՄՏԱՆԷՔ Ի ՏՈՒՆՍ ԶԻՍ
5. ԵՒ ԶԵՂԲԱՅՐ ԻՄ ԶՂՈՒ
6. ԿԱՍ ՅԻՇԵՅԷՔ Ի
7. Ք(ՐԻՍՏՈ)Ս

I Ewstat' elder made this mosaic. Whoever enters this house, remember to Christ me and my brother Łukas